

THE
FIVE MEN;
OR,
A REVIEW
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS AND PRINCIPLES
OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORY OF FRANCE:

TOGETHER WITH THE
LIVES OF ITS PRESENT MEMBERS,
S. F. L. H. LETOURNEUR, | L. M. REVELLIERE LEPAUX,
J. REWBELL, | P. F. I. N. BARRAS, AND
L. N. M. CARNOT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF JOSEPH DESPAZE.

By JOHN STODDART.

"Ce n'est plus la Terreur qui regne sur nous."
MONTJOYE *Consp. D'Orleans.*

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. S. JORDAN, NO. 166, FLEET STREET.

1797.

915
/13

39
2. 8.
47



PREFACE

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE following work, which has appeared within these few months in Paris, and which, according to report, has been received there with very general approbation, seems to be of sufficient importance to merit the attention of the English reader. In presenting it to the public, the translator has been chiefly influenced by the interesting nature of the subject, by the energy of the style, and by the apparent fidelity of the narration. Of its principles, moral and political, he by no means wishes to undertake a general defence: they at least deserve notice, as affording a clue to the opinions at present prevailing in France. A love of order and tranquillity, sentiments of moderation and justice, seem to be there considered as the best titles to popular approbation; it is evident, therefore, that the popular ideas partake strongly of those sentiments; it is evident that the majority of the French nation is inclined to order and tranquillity, to moderation

and justice. If the dominion of such principles be, in some instances, unfortunately suspended; if passion and prejudice seem to keep alive the flame of national animosity; this consideration should only stimulate the friends of humanity to labour with greater earnestness in obviating the real or imaginary causes of mutual discontent. The translator has thought it his duty to render with exactness those passages which relate to the conduct and character of this country: if the charges which they contain be true, we *ought* to acknowledge and to amend our errors; if they be false, we may the more easily pursue the task of reconciliation, having on our side, the calmness of innocence, and the energy of truth.

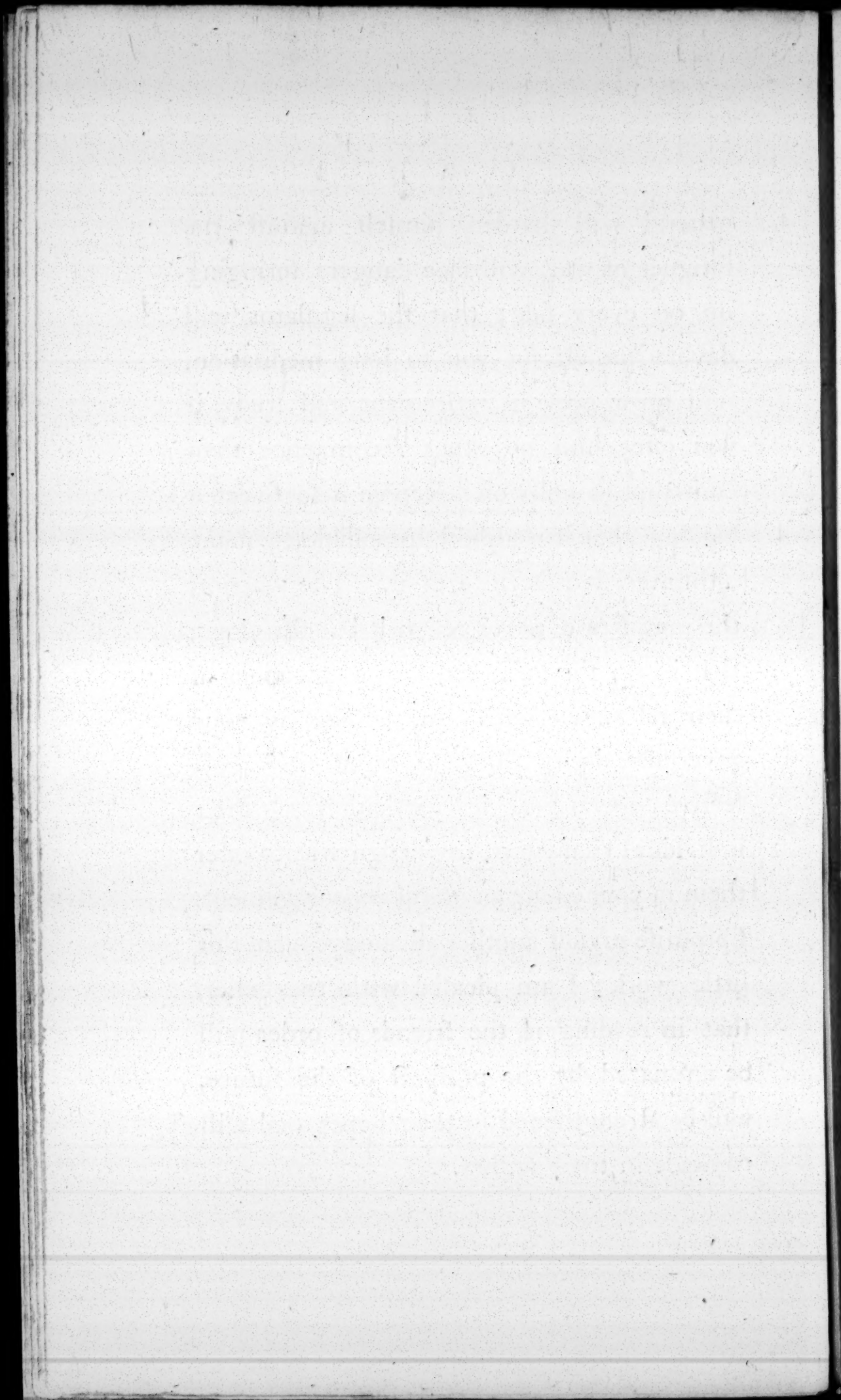
*Lincoln's Inn,
February 13th, 1797.*

INTRODUCTION.

FRENCHMEN! you have abjured that enthusiasm which for so long a time led you astray. You no longer exalt intrigue into patriotism, blind zeal into heroic attachment, and the most trifling services into inestimable benefits. Distrust, the tardy companion of misfortune, has come to your assistance. Instead of prostrating yourselves before men of celebrity, you seek to descend into the bottom of their souls, and to develop their secrets. That which is termed in you indifference—apathy, is but a state of reflection and judgment. It would be odious to complain of such a principle. A nation
so

so often deceived, so often the dupe, and the victim of its confidence, a nation which, amidst its liberators, has found traitors, tyrants, murderers, ought to reckon appearances as nothing, and to shew itself avaricious of eulogy. Be fearful, nevertheless, of passing from one extreme to the other ! In the early days of your regeneration, men of a common stamp seemed to you gods ; now, should gods themselves be presented to you, you would, perhaps, place them in the rank of men. This excessive severity may lead you to ingratitude—ingratitude the hardener of hearts ! The evil which this principle has brought upon empires, is by no means doubtful : the noblest heroes of antiquity owed to it their most cruel indignities ; it did not spare even that Athenian who was surnamed the Just ; it shook to their foundations, it overthrew Republics, no less excellent in their constitution than the one which you possess. Think you that the
general

general will harden himself against the fatigues of war, will face dangers springing up on every side; that the legislator will devote himself for you to long meditation, will grow grey in retirement and study, if you offer him no other recompence than contempt or oblivion? Repose is so sweet a blessing, that it is almost impossible to make a disinterested sacrifice of it. The warrior, the magistrate, never resign it but for glory; that is, for the suffrages, for the affections of their fellow-citizens. In delineating your governors, in recalling to mind their collective operations, in particularising their individual characters, my design was to offer them in your name an useful encouragement. I promise myself another advantage from this little work; I am pleased with the belief, that in reading it, the friends of order will be animated by the prospect of the future, will be strengthened in their hopes, and will coincide in their wishes.



THE
FIVE MEN.

OF THE DIRECTORY.

COMPELLED to unite for an instant with the sect of the Demagogues, in order to avoid the rage of the Royal Party, the Directory has apparently marked with error the first steps of their career. Men, by no means estimable, were the objects of their choice; they invested them with the title of administrators and commissioners; and these very men became the propagators of doubt, suspicion, and apprehension. The motive of their momentary elevation was not seen; that elevation was therefore charged upon their supposed patrons as a crime; it was but the too natural consequence of our culpable dissensions. The ruins of Vendemiaire yet smoked, our public squares were yet stained with blood; the depositaries of power heard complaints, and even reproaches, echoing in audacious murmurs to their ears; they had beheld

B

the

the abyfs open before them, they had tottered on its brink. Ought they to have treated the vanquished as faithful friends? Could they reasonably draw around them men by whom they had been proſcribed? The individuals of whoſe ſervice they made uſe, at that period, although unworthy of their eſteem, laid ſome claim to their confidence. They had formed the advanced guard of the victorious army; they proclaimed themſelves Avengers of the Republic, and ſpoke only of their devotion to the new conſtitution; they alternately recited the ſervices which they had performed, and the perſecutions which they had undergone; they even affected ſentiments of generoſity*; oblivion, forgivenefs of the paſt, were in their mouths; every thing ſpoke in their favour; every thing conſpired to render them neceſſary. The Directory, in making advances to them, only yielded to the irrefiſtible force of circumſtances.

When their exiſtence was conſolidated, their ſentiments better known, and the veil of prejudice torn away; when the inſurgent multitude had opened its eyes, and confeſſed its errors;

* The Terroriſts, at this period, preſented many addreſſes, in which they ſeemed to abjure all kind of reſentment, all kind of vengeance. They offered to their enemies, pardon and the kiſs of peace; and, as they had power on their ſide, ſuch a conduct in them appeared to great advantage.

when

when the partisans of royalty ceased to inspire terror, the Directory withdrew their support from the satellites of anarchy. "Wretches!" said they to them, indirectly, "if we employed you, it was with regret; the incongruity of events alone elevated your credit. You are only skilled in destroying; there is no longer need of your assistance. Your lot will indeed become less favourable than it is, but at the same time less rigorous than it has been; you will be no longer dreaded, no longer persecuted, you will be neither tyrants nor victims." If they spoke not these words, they formed this resolution; a resolution which required wisdom in conception, and energy in execution. Late events had re-animated the hopes of the disorganizers: whoever professed not their odious doctrines was a *sectionary*, a conspirator; and for the epithet, *Royalist*, they had substituted the still more terrible one *Chouan*.

Political aggregations re-appeared; disregarding the laws, they, according to their custom, re-established their mutual correspondences, and their connection with the blind multitude. All the villains that torment this beautiful Empire, crowded together to these assemblies, they contended with each other for the tribune, stimulated no less by ambition than by vengeance, like those ferocious animals which, delivered from the toils of the hunter, seek him with flaming eye and foaming jaws, impatient to tear him piecemeal.

The Directory had not the weakness even to hesitate, when they observed the efforts of those men, and the apathy of the citizens. They knew the extent of their resources, the fanaticism of their Janizaries, the power of their protectors ; nevertheless, by a proclamation, of daring wisdom, they shut up the cavern of their meetings*.

One circumstance which rendered this measure no less memorable than decisive, was, that it was taken with the unanimous concurrence of every voter ; until that moment, the factious had given themselves up to the most flattering conjectures, Deceived by some trifling advances, they thought they had found protectors in the chief magistrates. The certainty of their mistake was to them a mortifying stroke ; it made them groan, but it did not discourage them. Their peculiar characteristic is, an unyielding fury in their pursuits.

Driven from their dens, they assembled in public places, To the clubs succeeded groups. To obtain a just idea of these tumultuous assemblages, it is necessary to have closely observed the elements of which they are composed. Bands of vagabonds, thousands of cut-throats, reeking with blood, and gorged with wine, here proclaimed, without shame, their murderous principles ; here

* The society of the Pantheon was composed of four thousand individuals.

marked out the constitutional code as the character of despotism—the virtuous Republicans as cruel oppressors; they loudly invoked the manes of the triumvirs; they involved in one common decree of proscription, the farmers, the merchants, and the public functionaries; they fixed their savage looks on the Manège, the Thuilleries, the Luxembourg; they proposed carnage and fire, the dagger and the torch, as plans of regeneration. Dangerous in proportion as the springs which moved them* were secret, they kept no moderation in their proceedings; their arms were already raised to strike, when a law, solicited by the Directory, placed them under the sword of the tribunals. It is true that this energy was seconded by the bayonet; revolt had not yet introduced itself into the tent of the soldier. It soon obtained this terrible success. When the Directory were desirous, a second time, to employ a rigour, as necessary as it was

* The multitudes which have been in agitation since the establishment of the constitutional Republic, have no object in view. They yield, mechanically, to the party of the Jacobins, and the Jacobins to that of the party of Orleans. It is this party which acts the chief character. It writes, it bribes, it sets every spring in motion, and, when a conspiracy is discovered, it maintains that the conspirators had no union, no plan, no means; that they ought rather to be confined as madmen, than punished as criminals. The chiefs of this party merit rather contempt than indignation; they will, never, obtain success; for, if their profound hypocrisy be in their favour, their excessive cowardice is no less against them.

lawful;

lawful ; shall I speak it ! they found themselves alone, surrounded by interested citizens, by indefatigable conspirators, and soldiers without subordination. In this fatal conjuncture there remained with them but a small body of faithful troops ; they collected them with so much celerity, put them in motion with so much judgment, that the rebels were in an instant surprised, surrounded, and obliged, ignominiously, to lay down their arms. If this rebellion has not been imitated, it is easy to divine the reason. The most combustible substances do not kindle of themselves. The extinguishing a spark, in time, may prevent a wide conflagration. The conspiracy of the 22d of Floreal (May 12) is an event of less importance. The police seems, at the first glance, to claim all the honour of its discovery. Nevertheless, if this affair be considered in its true relations, if it be observed, that a representative, celebrated for his long misfortunes, and for a brilliant action, was involved in it, as if to serve for a buckler to the other criminals ; if the prejudices, the sophistry, the interests, the obstacles of every kind which it was necessary to surmount, in order to reach him, be calculated, it will be more and more evident, that the reins of the state are held by the most firm and skilful hands.

Within six months, three factions, equally formidable, have been repressed with an equal vigour.

gour. The followers of Marat, and the accomplices of Philip, have been taken in their own snares. In attempting to destroy the Republic, they have only destroyed their friends. By their imprudence, they have precipitated Drouet into an abyss of misery, and laid open to Babœuf the road to the scaffold. As to the friends of the ancient government, the Royalists, properly so called *, they have not dared to undertake any thing; for it would be absurd to dignify with the title of plots, their hisses at the theatres, or their sarcasms in public places. Now I ask every judicious observer, whether, if the government had done nothing more, this would not, alone, have been sufficient for its glory? Would it not have deserved the gratitude of the French people? Others will decide—I continue,

The war was prolonged; the coalition of Princes still existed; it had concentrated its last efforts, in the hope of obtaining honourable conditions of peace. The Princes of Germany, and those of Italy, doubled their contingent; Sardinia

* Notwithstanding the subtle definitions of some declaimers, who see Royalism everywhere, even in the journals of Lebois, —it is certain that the Royalists have profited by the lesson which they received in Vendemiaire; and that, in general, they only desire to attach themselves to the government. They will never be Republicans, exclaims intolerance. Good God! what signifies that, if they respect, if in case of necessity they even defend, the laws of the Republic.

had

had beset her mountains with swords and cannon; Austria, profiting by our example, had, in her turn, risen as it were in a mass; thanks to the liberality of England, the waves of Pactolus rolled through her fields. By a contrast, frightful to remember, our armies languished in absolute nakedness; their pay had been annihilated, together with the credit of the paper-money; want inflicted on them all her severities; they demanded, at once, bread and clothing; indignant at having nothing to oppose against the inclemency of the air, but their rags and their laurels. Disgust seemed even to have broken their courage. Every thing announced that they must experience a reverse of fortune, or at least behold themselves reduced to act on the defensive. Europe affirmed it; France herself was in doubt; and yet the phalanxes of the leagued Monarchs fled on all sides, like a herd of savage beasts dispersed by the fury of the hunters. The Po, the Rhine, the Lahn, were but feeble barriers to them: Charles had the same fate as Beaulieu; the inhabitants of Mentz trembled like those of Rome; Frankfort opened its gates, like Milan; and, perhaps, the haughty Vienna will one day capitulate like Turin. The plans of our campaigns were traced with so much wisdom, our forces disposed so judiciously, that the enemy, prevented in his attacks, embarrassed in his retreats,

treats, deceived in all his calculations, no longer knew how to direct his efforts; and, for several months, abandoned himself entirely to chance. Glory, without doubt, immortal glory is due to their immediate conquerors, to the courage of our armies, to the talents of our Generals. They strike like the Divinity; they direct the thunder at their will; but it is from the Luxembourg* that the bolt is hurl'd.

There yet remained that internal war, so painful to sustain, so difficult to terminate. On each bank of the Loire were cottages converted into arsenals, and husbandmen into savage warriors. Victory had, in these countries, in vain declared for us; in vain had the ravages of fire and sword been multiplied. The vanquished had not yet submitted. The profanation of their worship, the severities so often useless, the crimes so new and unheard-of, had ulcerated their minds to such a degree, that they spoke not of the Republic but with dread, nor of Republicans but with horror. They no longer engaged in open battles, but signalized themselves every day in bloody skirmishes. Their wandering tribes excelled in the art of uniting and dispersing opportunely. Immense forests served them for camps, magazines, and fortresses. If you sought them,

* The palace of the Directory.

you found only the traces of their footsteps. Whenever they meant to attempt a shock, they shewed themselves unexpectedly ; they arrived at the same spot by twenty different paths : a post attacked by them, was a post slaughtered even to the last man. Our main armies doubted of their existence, and our detached parties every day fell into their power. Too weak to conquer, too stubborn to yield, they became assassins : by means of their ambuscades, feeble old men and boys mowed down the flower of our soldiery *. It was proposed to subdue them by famine : this project had not even the appearance of reason, since they inhabit our most fertile countries, since they are no less laborious than brave, and since they are accustomed to wield with one hand the gun, and with the other the spade. Scarcely less difficult was it to burn their retreats. What efforts, what a length of time would it not have required to reduce to a plain, an hundred leagues of land covered with woods ! And how disastrous the expedient of heaping up ruins and ashes where, each year, the most luxuriant harvests grow. How, then, was repose to be given to these climates ? Was it right to send thither the cowardly Santerre, or the savage Tureau, to

* At the very time when Barriere said to the Convention, " La Vendée is no more !" those who combated the insurgents looked on that war as interminable.

recommence there the revolutionary barbarities, or to sign, again, treaties involved in obscurity. Such remedies would but have rendered the evil incurable. One path alone could lead to the desired end—it is that which has been followed. A happy system has been adopted, combining prudence with energy, moderation with patriotism, clemency with rigour. Its execution was entrusted to the worthy rival of the Pichegrus, the Jourdain, the Moreaus, the Buonapartes—to the young and celebrated Hoche, whose moral character, and whose talents, merited an equal confidence. Most of the men who were chosen to second him, thought and felt as he did. They spoke the same language, they used the same means. Inflexible towards the armed rebels, they treated the others as brethren; they opened their arms to the penitent; they took under their safeguard the weaknesses of sex, of age, of error. Our troops, returned under the yoke of discipline, every inhabitant was enabled to enjoy his property, to exercise his worship, to live in peace! It was proved to them, that the laws of the Republic had nothing contradictory to the laws of honour. Then, they themselves filled that gulph which had been above five years open, and which threatened to swallow up the whole of the present generation.

Successes so multiplied, so rapid, seem to resemble prodigy. The Directory may well be

proud of them, but they have not been inflated by them. Our triumphs, far from inspiring them with exaggerated pretensions, have confirmed them in their principles of moderation. The more fatal our arms have been to Kings, the more have the Directory endeavoured to put an end to this deplorable contest. Silence still reigned in the cabinets, when they already offered candid propositions; when they already caused the word Peace, a word so sweet to the ear, and to the heart, to resound throughout Europe. True it is, that they have since treated on conditions burthenfome to the vanquished; but it was necessary to punish the obstinacy of our barbarous aggressors. Was the coalition of Pilnitz, then, a chimera? Did not ten powers dishonourably unite against one? Did they not give the dreadful signal, exhaust our cities, depopulate our hamlets, cause a river of blood to flow? And shall we respect the sanctity of their treasures! Shall we demand of them no pecuniary indemnifications! May the regulators of our destiny never have other crimes than these with which to reproach themselves!

Their conduct, considered in other points of view, merits other praises. Factions, war, negotiation, have not been the sole objects of their labours. They have also meditated on the precarious state of our finances; and their ideas on this important subject, are not their least valuable titles

titles to our esteem. In adopting them, we might have avoided those tedious catalogues of impost, those contradictory regulations, those immoral measures which have destroyed confidence, tripled the resources of the stock-jobbers, and become to us an inexplicable chaos, a labyrinth without termination.

Their zeal in defending the superior objects of their choice, deserves also to be reckoned for something. Had they listened to the wishes of cabals or factions, the ministers accused at one time of lukewarmness, at another of exaggeration, would have only appeared upon the theatre; they would have passed before our eyes like fleeting shadows. The first step would have been to detach from the government its unshaken friends; the next, to surround them with traitors. This they foresaw: disdaining vile clamours, and perfidious denunciations, they confounded their own cause with that of their principal agents; they judged them not by the opinions of others. They resolved to receive no foreign impulse; and this resistance has become the firmest prop of the Republican edifice.

Such have been the cares, such the services of the Directory. Although the delineation has afforded me pleasure, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge their faults; I shall withdraw the veil which,

which, perhaps, conceals those faults even from their own observation.

The famous couplets sung, by their order, in our theatres, for a long while irritated mens' minds, and deadened that patriotism which it pretended to animate. Some of their messages have provoked decrees of a too rigorous nature; such, for example, as that passed against the priests. Sometimes, on the contrary, they have shown themselves too indulgent; they have been contented with reducing to a state of impotence, those criminals for whom morality, no less than policy, seemed to dictate punishment. They left the tribunals in a fatal inaction, from whence they might have drawn them without a violation of principle, without an invasion of the judicial authority. They fluctuated too long in uncertainty with regard to the remedies applicable to the wounds of the south. Complaints have already been made, and will long continue to be made, against the commissioners to whom they have entrusted the important direction of the colonies, and who will not escape from accusation themselves, by assuming the part of accusers. If public opinion deserve credit, many of these wretches have shown themselves worthy rivals of the ravagers of the continent. The Directory have not lost sight of the errors of that Convention,

vention, in which were united so much wisdom and so much ignorance; so many virtues and so many crimes; where Philippeaux sat by the side of Marat, and Verginaud near Darmonville; of that Convention, which wore the chains of an obscure robber, and whose prodigies will recal to the mind of posterity, the history of fabulous ages; which, expoied to the temptations of hatred and licentiousness, only ruled by taking advantage of our divisions: which implored the assistance of each sect, and which each sect had, in its turn, the disgraceful honour of serving. The Directory saw, at a distance, that rock, and prudently avoided it; but good Frenchmen have, with reason, feared that they may split on another. Although they have need of forces easily manageable, they have endangered their safety, perhaps their very existence, by keeping at too great a distance the citizens, and making too great advances to the soldiery. At least, they ought to have preserved a just medium; for, in great cities, soldiers breathe a contagious atmosphere—they are incessantly corrupted. Seduction, prodigal of gold and of libels, leads them astray so much the more easily, as by means of words it deceives them with regard to things, as it changes its mask every instant, and varies its forms without end. Besides, commotion is no very great evil to
him

him who makes danger his sport; to him, whose only possession is his musket, his knapsack, and his cartouch-box. On the contrary, the citizens (I take this word in its peculiar acceptation having almost all a house, or a piece of land; a warehouse or a manufactory, a counting-house, or a shop, shudder at the mere idea of a social rupture. The government is to them what the advanced guard is to an army; when it is attacked they must take up arms, they must fly to its defence, if not through attachment to it, at least for their own interest.

This important truth has not, always, been sufficiently felt. Fortunately we are recovering from our errors: experience enlightens mens' minds; necessity unites their hearts. France begins to taste the benefits of a harmony so much the more precious as it was the more desired. The situation of the Directory is such, that they may well disregard a vain adulation; they find their recompence in the result of their efforts. When they assumed the reins of empire, confusion and violence prevailed over the laws. Each department, each canton, regulated itself in its own manner. Those anarchical movements, which have been named actions and reactions, were everywhere felt; everywhere crime displayed itself audaciously. Here, the satellites of terror, whilst hastening to erect new scaffolds,

scaffolds, gave a loose to their ferocious joy; there, the royalist assassins converted the title of patriot into a sentence of death, and avenged the sceptre by the stroke of the poniard. In one commune the tree of liberty was cut down; in another the cry of "Long live the Mountain!" resounded. To add to our misfortunes, the circulation of provisions was everywhere interrupted: scarcity reigned in our great cities, and hideous famine advanced toward them with hasty strides. At present, the man of virtue, whatever his opinions may be, lives exempt from fear*. He, who has never troubled the repose of another, is proclaimed a good citizen; and those whom the governors† esteem, are those whom the governed honour. Morality re-assumes its rights, industry its activity, commerce its hopes: even luxury and abundance smile on the victorious nation. In that city, where thirteen months ago the cannon thundered; where fifty thousand combatants contended for the public squares, the streets, the lanes; where fury only yielded to rage—obstinacy to madness; where lamentable cries were

* The Directory has said, in one of its proclamations, "He is a good citizen who never troubled the repose of any one."

† The magistrates whom the Directory had provisionally named, were, for the most part, re-elected by the primary assemblies of Paris.

mixed with the whistling of the murderous bullet; where death mowed down his victims by heaps; where every building shook to its foundation; where every family was drowned in tears: in that Paris, so often converted into a field of battle, order, confidence, the fine arts, have re-appeared in splendid emulation. Specie circulates there as formerly: every kind of provision abound in its markets; its twenty theatres were never more crowded; its national festivals glow with the most animated brilliancy; its former tastes revive; all its citizens blend together their sentiments, and at length find security under the egis of toleration. Should our ardent desires be realized; should peace come to renovate public credit, the Revolution will then be compleated, its advantages will remain to us, its misfortunes will be forgotten.

Until then, do not give yourselves up to the charms of a dangerous security, you to whom are owing such inconceivable changes. Near the rich man who revels, listen to the poor man who murmurs: in the midst of a nation, now rendered wise and moderate, behold incorrigible conspirators, strangers alike to remorse and to tranquillity. Invariable in your principles, unshaken in your duties, you should draw still closer the bonds which unite to you men of virtue.

Men

Men of virtue alone are equitable judges, grateful friends, vigilant protectors.

Let an iron hand weigh heavily on the heads of the wicked: calculate not their number, display a courage equal to the greatness of your destiny. In a word, dread nothing but yourselves; let not ambition, envy, and, above all, discord, come under your roofs. Aspire not to privileges, yield not up rights. A steady progress has conducted you to glory; a single deviation may lead you to the scaffold. When I analyze your position, you seem to me to stand panting on a steep mountain: to surmount it you have need of no less address than vigour; obstacles present themselves to you at every step. Nevertheless you advance; you have placed an immense interval between yourselves and the abyss. A few more efforts, and you will peaceably seat yourselves on the summit; should your eyes fail you, should one false step make you totter, it is all over; you will fall, you will be cast down covered with bruises, and in your fall you will involve the first nation in the universe.

LETOURNEUR.

WHATEVER idea the vulgar may form to themselves of great characters, those men deserve a distinguished rank, who uniting talents and virtue to the affections of a pure heart, have constantly pursued the path of duty. Without having made the universe re-echo with one's name, without having written like Rousseau, spoken like Mirabeau, triumphed like Pichegru, we may acquire real claims to the gratitude of our country. What I am about to say of Stephen Francis Louis Honoré Letourneur, will afford a proof of this assertion.

He was born at Granville, in the department of La Manche, on the 15th of March, 1751. His father was what was at that time called "*un honnête Bourgeois* *," possessing a small fortune and a spotless reputation. At first employed in the administration of the marine, he soon became chief of an office of the classes, and at length

* The nomenclature of ranks having passed away together with their political existence, it might be productive of error in the present day to render the above expression "a respectable citizen"—A citizen, in the narrowest sense of the word, was formerly designated by the contemptuous appellation of *Bourgeois*: a citizen, in its most enlightened and liberal acceptation, is now denoted by the comprehensive and honourable title of *Citoyen*. T.

the

the Minister Choiseul offered him, as a reward for his services, letters of nobility, which his philosophy (so early enlightened) induced him to refuse, persuaded that it is impossible to augment moral, any more than physical greatness, by inscribing it on a sheet of parchment. His son, the only object of his ambition, of his hopes, received from him a studied education; he profited by it; and at an early age possessed a ripened genius, and a perfected reason. He devoted himself particularly to the mathematics; his wish was to enter into the corps of Engineers, a wish which he realized on the 1st of January, 1768, at a period when it was unnecessary, in that career, to have recourse to the magic succours of heraldry. His brethren in arms agree in saying, that he sustained his profession with honour. Incapable of hastening his advancement by intrigue, he nevertheless obtained the title of captain, which he enjoyed at the commencement of the Revolution, when liberty with her tremendous arm shook to the ground the antique columns of the monarchy. It is well known, with what rapidity military men have since that time arisen to the summit of their desires. Thousands of individuals, as ignorant of the science of the Cæsars, as of the doctrines of Mahomet, have been suddenly transformed into superior officers. One, full of assurance, quits the stage to
put

put himself at the head of a regiment; a second makes but one step from the warehouse to the command in chief: others, still more audacious, have exchanged the surplice and square cap, for the double epaulette and the three-coloured plume. How many soldiers have with shame recognized their ancient pastor in their new general! During the space of four years, to desire and to obtain promotion in the army was the same thing; and yet Letourneur modestly retained the rank of captain, and was only made chief of a battalion in his turn; that is to say, by order of seniority.

He was at St. Germain-en-laye, by permission from the government, to pass six months there, when the walls of the Bastille fell before the efforts of a people avenged but too late. That triumph, the precursor of events so glorious, of catastrophes so cruel, electrified every mind. From one end of the empire to the other, the emblems of independence were adopted as rallying signals; every one hastened to range himself under the standard of insurrection; every city, every village, declared itself in a state of war. At St. Germain, as at Paris, the national guards were provisionally organized: he was admitted into them, and commanded a company; and he made himself conspicuous by principles at once wise and patriotic. By proposing for the service regulations

regulations which were adopted, he concurred most ably in the maintenance of public order. The first circumstances of his political life proved that he attached himself faithfully to the cause of the patriots; and by this word, so much profaned, I do not mean those ferocious ravagers, less jealous of their rights than greedy of ruin, the most dangerous enemies of every kind of government; but that august majority which shook off the double yoke of despotism and error, in the hope of obtaining the lot which it deserved; which never called crime to its assistance, which persecuted no one, but was desirous of promoting the freedom and happiness of all.

Letourneur, at the expiration of his time of absence, left his new companions to return to Cherbourg, the place of his ordinary residence as Officer of Engineers. A popular society was just formed there; he was a member of it, and became its President. It was then, that his sentiments developed themselves in all their purity. He might, like many others, have abused his influence, have favoured informers, have persecuted the malcontents, whose resistance already provoked just murmurs; but he only made use of his credit in propagating sound opinions; he was constantly employed in moderating exaggeration, and stimulating apathy, in connecting a love of mankind with a hatred of usurpers. Such a
conduct

conduct could not but augment the esteem which his fellow-citizens shewed him. They named him as an Elector; they deputed him to the Legislative Assembly. He brought thither the same devotion to the interests of his country, the same rectitude of intention. A stranger to the cabals which were formed there, he took his seat sometimes by the side of Ramon, sometimes of Condorcet; he had no object but patriotism, no guide but his own heart. Some men of exalted principles (as they were called) reproached him, at one time, with his partiality to La Fayette; he treated their glaring insincerity with disdain. As to the men of real worth, who did not agree with him in sentiment, they felt it very possible, without a crime, to look with respect on the deliverer of a friendly nation, one of the conquerors in the cause of French freedom, the constitutionalist most dreaded by the court, the General adored by the Parisians. He had, as an apology, the situation of events, the order of things at that time established, a prejudice almost universal. The sufferings which the fugitive of Sedan has since endured in the prisons of Austria, have justified him still more fully. And, indeed, if there be any errors of a pardonable nature, they are those that are derived from a lenity the associate of benevolence, and which no one can blame, because every one has need of it in his turn.

He

He spoke but seldom during the sitting of the first legislature. Nevertheless he made, in the name of the Committee of Marine, over which he a long while presided, several luminous reports, in which were found method, useful views, and valuable information. His colleagues honoured him with a deserved confidence; of this they gave a striking proof, in appointing him to direct the works of the camp near Paris. Charged with this task, he had not only workmen to employ—he had rebels to restrain. Every method was tried to agitate the innumerable multitude placed under his orders. Every instant there bellowed around him a band of villains, a herd of tygers, exasperated by the detestable Marat. These complained, with execrations, of the quality of their victuals, and the smallness of their pay; those, regulating the destiny of the state, burnt with the desire of giving to the Revolution a more rapid progress; they saw, on all sides, traitors, satellites of the tyrant, and founded their hopes of revenge on the rope and the lamp-iron. In the midst of them was incessantly heard that confused murmur, so alarming, so terrible, which precedes a violent tempest, or the explosion of a volcano; their hands were ever ready to break the ultimate bond of society. So much the more difficult to restrain, as they

E

had

had not yet tasted the bitter fruits of anarchy ; their chief employed, at once, mildness and resolution ; he encouraged the weak, enlightened him who had been seduced, curbed the seditious, and, multiplying himself, as it were, with the increase of danger, prevented all of them from passing the limits of obedience. He acted toward them as the skilful charioteer, who guides coursfers impatient of the bit ; who alternately soothes and threatens them, incites and restrains them, urges them onward, or keeps them back ; thus he convinces them of their impotence, gives to their efforts the requisite harmony, and obliges them to draw abreast that car, which they seemed ready to dash in pieces.

Less skilful, or less fortunate, the Assembly, of which he was a member, under the domination of factions, uncertain of the national wish, equally incapable of defending Royalty, and of proclaiming the Republic, yielded, though with regret, to the revolutionary torrent. It demanded successors ; he was re-elected, in spite of the intrigues of the anarchists to deprive him of the confidence of his constituents. Men of his disposition were no longer necessary ; only such as Hebert, as Collot d'Herbois, as Robespierre, and especially as Marat, were in estimation. They attempted to prepossess his department with these

these ideas; they painted him as a *Modéré*, as a luke-warm patriot; lists were circulated, on which his name appeared loaded with calumny. These efforts were impotent: his private life was known; he had been observed on the great theatre of action; the hearts of men were not yet perverted; his moral character prevailed. His fellow-citizens placed him in the Convention, and the Convention, by a decree, reinstated him in the direction of the labours of the camp. But his renewed efforts, his indefatigable activity, had not, always, the same success. Revolt had acquired new protectors; the Commune, the club of the Cordeliers, and that of the Jacobins, seconded it with an audacity perpetually increasing; the assemblage of workmen became every instant more tumultuous; it was thought prudent to disband them. This measure, so dangerous at that juncture, was executed without tumult, without disturbance, without commotion. Few of the services which have been rendered to France, in her agitated state, deserve to be ranked above this; and of this, the whole glory remains with Letourneur. That glory, however, was to him a dangerous acquisition. Marat attempted to procure his assassination, by means of a soldier who is still alive, and who rejected his offers with horror.

He was sent on a mission to inspect the coasts

of the Mediterranean. He passed through those departments divided by such a variety of opinions, of interests, of enmities; where the hearts of men resemble furnaces of fire, and their heads volcanoes. Toulon became the centre of his civil and military operations. Nevertheless not a reproach, not a complaint was uttered against him. The factious learnt to fear him, the Royalists to respect him, the patriots to love him. Happy had those countries been, if the Revolution had subjected them only to the authority of such representatives.

As soon as France had declared against Spain, he repaired to the Eastern Pyrenees. There he found our army in the most deplorable situation. They were in need of every thing; men, clothing, tents, muskets, ammunition, provisions, and artillery. The attitude of the enemy was aggressive, their preparations immense, their progress alarming. Nothing presented itself to stop them. He opposed to them the camp of L'Union, which, for three months, covered the departments of the South, and, by giving time to our defenders to collect together on that frontier, served, in some sort, to cultivate those laurels which they, afterwards, reaped in such abundance.

Here the course of his public actions is, as it were, suspended. The revolt of the 31st of May came

came to bend France under a bloody yoke; he rejoined the Convention, and was no more spoken of. If he was not hurried into a dungeon, accused by the triumvirs, dragged before their judicial assassins, it was because their genius, so prolific in stratagems, could find no stratagem to involve him. But they forgot what he had done; they gave him credit for nothing. The offices, the committees, the tribunes, were equally interdicted to him. He lived in obscurity for fifteen months. "Why did he not meet a noble death?" perhaps some of our modern Decii may cry. And you, ye intrepid declaimers, why did you not rush upon the guards that kept your friends in chains; upon the robbers, who divided amongst them your property; upon the executioners, who bathed themselves in the blood of your parents? Could a few individuals do more than a whole nation? Had that nation transmitted to them its force, together with its rights? No, that deadly terror is not inexplicable, which, during the course of the proscriptions, seized on the most generous minds. It had its foundation in the entire subversion of morality, and in the brutal errors of the multitude. We brave death in the fields of Mars: the emotion of the senses, rage, the love of duty, the pride of glory, multiply heroes, and hurry them into the midst of flames, or against the point

point of the sword. We sacrifice our days to the certainty of doing honour to our family, to the ennobling hope of living eternally in the memory of our fellow-men. But coolly to devote ourselves to death, to undergo the fate of villains, to hear, in our last moments, the execrations of a blind multitude which we have not ceased to love, and for which we have not ceased to combat; to draw down the same opprobrium, the same misfortunes on our parents and our children, to plunge them voluntarily into the tomb!—If this sacrifice be heroic, such heroism is above the reach of humanity. However this be, the parricidal knife was broken in the hands of the tyrants; vice was overthrown; liberty re-appeared, and with her Letourneur. The enslaved Convention had disdained him; the liberated Convention lavished on him the testimonies of its esteem; it placed him in the Military Committee, elected him, successively, its secretary and its president; sent him to inspect the naval force of the Mediterranean; charged him with the important and delicate mission to India*; subjected to his su-

* This mission was prevented from taking place by circumstances of greater moment.

For an account of the motives of this important mission, the reader may consult the Proceedings of the Convention on the 4th, 13th, and 14th of February, 1795, as detailed in the Ninth Volume of the POLITICAL STATE OF EUROPE.

perintendance

perintendance the army of the Interior ; named him as a member of the Committee of Public Safety, a committee, by whom he was entrusted with the direction of the armed force of Paris.

He filled these different functions with no less capacity than zeal, no less energy than prudence. All the factions found in him an unshaken adversary: he did not serve one at the expence of the others. His hatred of the satellites of kings has never been diminished; he has pursued them without relaxation and without pity: but the horde of revolutionary cannibals has not found him less rigorous. He has proved by his discourses, by his writings, and by his actions, that anarchy is in his eyes the worst of states. In a word, he is one of those few Frenchmen to whom the title of Republicans can be justly applied. A happy simplicity characterizes his manners and his disposition: he divides his time between his friends, his family, and his country. Society is not disagreeable to him; on the contrary, he cultivates it, and derives pleasure from it; especially from the society of men who think as he does, and whose desires are directed to the establishment of morality and the laws. A malcontent, attached to monarchical systems, is no less displeasing to him than a demagogue immersed in conspiracies. His strongest hatred is directed against the movers of intrigue and ambition.

At

At the sight of them, his brow contracts itself, his urbanity disappears, and gloominess seems intirely to overspread him. It may even be said that he carries his distrust too far, he easily believes that men attempt to deceive him, and oftentimes suffers himself to be prejudiced against those who endeavour to obtain his favour.

He is not always free from a kind of impatience, which has even the appearance of passion. But his only ambition is to serve his country; his chief happiness to render himself dear to those who habitually associate with him. You need not fear, in his presence, to censure this or that act of the Directory: he will not be offended. If you condemn his motives, he will present you with their apology, will convince you of their solidity, or will ultimately accede to your arguments. Although he is firmly attached to his opinions, he readily prefers those which appear more useful. Hence it happens that no one has fewer detractors; not a libel, not a newspaper attempts to calumniate him. He has always distinguished himself on the great scene of action; twice has he visited those countries which have been the grave of so many other reputations; calumny knows it and is silent. Happy those, who like him can say to themselves:—"Often have I acted well, never ill: if my judgment has sometimes misled me, my heart has always conducted

ducted me aright. Faithful to the cause which alone appeared to me just, I have yet believed that others might, without criminality, think differently from me. Invested with an unlimited authority, I did not make it subservient either to my resentment or my fortune. The orphan demands not of me his father; my name resounds not from the tongue of the oppressed; my orders have not caused a drop of blood, nor even a tear to flow. No informer rises up against me: my conscience troubles not my repose; I fear neither its tribunal nor that of mankind."

REWBELL.

BORN at Colmar in 1746, John Rewbell passed at that place the early part of his life. The education which he there received, developed his natural faculties, sound judgment, just sense, calm and solid reason: but it polished, only in part, an almost German roughness, which, to the generality of Frenchmen, is far from pleasing; which gives to advice the air of reproach—to remark, that of refusal; which sits but ill on the individual without power, and which men in authority ought to be particularly fearful of indulging; because it affrights the

F

petitioner,

petitioner, discourages the unfortunate, keeps at a distance valuable friends ; because it hides the most estimable affections under a disgusting exterior, and even conceals them from the most penetrating eye. He, whose portrait I am now sketching, resembles, in certain points, that dramatic character called *The Morose Benefactor*. Like him, suspicious in his thoughts, laconic in discourse, reserved in address, even rough and hasty in his manners ; like him also, he has a frank and upright disposition, a generous and feeling heart. I pass to his public actions.

His love for independence, shewed itself long before the Revolution. A distinguished advocate at the sovereign Council of Alsace, he often defended individuals and districts against the despotism of the feudal lords ; he feared not to appeal, in more than one instance, to the primitive rights of citizens ; he combated, with courage, odious privileges ; and merited, at once, the hatred and the esteem of the powerful nobility. In 1774, he was led to Paris by the mere desire of pleading against the Duke of Wirtemberg, who, by favour of a certain edict, had augmented the cruel burthen of the *Corvées* upon his estates. He considered this great cause in its various relations to the civil laws, and political institutions ; he strengthened his defence with those enlightened axioms to which the Revolution

volution owes its origin. His bold pencil portrayed the inhabitants of the country, the usurpations of petty tyrants, the opprobrium cast upon the husbandman, who was metamorphosed by them into an obedient slave—a beast of burthen. His philosophy prevailed. The Duke was condemned in spite of the claims which he adduced, and the authorities on which he rested. The abuses, whose overflowing tide he wished to have increased, were arrested in their course, and confined within due limits.

Rewbell, from his youth, seemed to have taken as his motto: *debellare superbos*. In fact, the ecclesiastical corporations, the territorial princes, the sovereign council, who desired the assistance of his pen, and from whom he might have expected pensions, places, and honours, had him, constantly, as their opponent. He never ceased to oppose a generous resistance against their haughty pretensions, and to echo in their ears, the complaints of misery—the voice of justice—the cry of duty.

Elected a deputy of Alsace, he distinguished himself in the Constituent Assembly, in that assembly for ever famous; in which knowledge, eloquence, genius, shone with so much brilliancy; in which success was so difficult, and, consequently, so glorious; in which the people

had, as their advocates, a Thouret, a Bailli, a Chapelier, a Mirabeau ; in which the throne was supported by a Malouet, a Mounier, a Cazalès, a Maury. He distinguished himself there, by an inviolable attachment to the good cause ; by a well-modelled eloquence ; by an impressive logic, and by an uncommon degree of information. He occupied the president's chair.

Scarcely had he laid down the title of *Constituent Legislator*, when he was named Procuror-general Syndic, by the department of the Upper Rhine. This office was important, and even difficult to fill. It was necessary to make the new principles triumph in those countries which were still in subjection to the old prejudices ; to snatch the torches of fanaticism from the hands of its most zealous partizans ; to repress pride and revolt, where the disgraced *castles* preserved a formidable influence. Agitated, over the whole surface of its territory, by its internal enemies, the department of the Upper Rhine found itself, also, menaced by those who were without, and to whom it seemed, at every moment, ready to fall a prey. Rewbell neglected nothing to prevent this evil : through his patriotic care the most vigorous measures were employed ; the police kept an eye upon every suspicious character ; the magistrates redoubled their energy—the service of the National

tional Guard became permanent ; it was impossible for the traitors to conspire—to correspond ; and the good citizens preserved, uninterrupted, that security which is the most precious of the social blessings. Nevertheless, apprehensions were manifested there, at the epoch of the 10th of August. Important intelligence arrived ; it was received without any preparatory information, without any subsequent details. The sentiments and ideas of the generality were, at that time, but half regenerated. The Monarchy retained rights, whose absurdity did not prevent them from being esteemed sacred ; by the effect of an habit, which was called duty, a remainder of veneration was felt for the thing, and of respect for the person. It was not imagined that the words King and Misery could be coupled together. Some minds, prematurely enlightened in their conceptions, from that moment, began to organize a Republican system. They dared to predict every thing—to desire every thing. The people, on the contrary, appeared content with their destiny, and thought that they had freed themselves from their chains, because they had broken its first links. The inviolability of the monarch, the constitution, their oaths, appeared to them insurmountable barriers. Many persons have contended, that these opinions were right in point of morality ;
they

they have, at least, been obliged to own them politically wrong. However that be, the majority of the French remained, for a moment, suspended between approbation and censure, sorrow and joy. In the neighbourhood of Rewbell, the alarm was general. The citizens, misled by prejudice, pride, or ignorance, thought themselves universally wounded in the person of their ancient chief.

The army itself wavered, and broke out into murmurs. It was in presence of the enemy, it had our territory to defend ; and its dissolution was apprehended. Perhaps that dissolution would have taken place, but for the efforts of some administrators, and particularly of the Procuror-Syndic. He made himself acquainted with the sentiments of the officers ; he conjured them, in the name of their country, to keep their posts, to drive far from our frontiers the foreign satellites ; to await, in the field of honour, the result of the intestine contentions. They relished his counsels—so moving, so persuasive ; and the waves of sedition, which roared aloud, and seemed to threaten devastation, were chained within their bed.

His conduct as a member of the Convention, contributed not less to conciliate the public esteem. A striking mark of the homage paid to his prudence and talents, was his appointment
to

to the Committee of Diplomacy. Few men possess more perfectly, than him, the difficult art of discussing the grand interests, and maintaining the relations and connections of nations.

It is not forgotten that, for seven months, he exposed himself in Mentz to an increasing succession of fatigues and dangers. But it is not generally known how painful the task which he there performed, really was. The intrepid Merlin (of Thionville) could not, alone, repel the assaults and prepare the attacks, propose the plans, and decree, and execute them at the same time. Whilst he triumphed on the northern side, it was necessary that his colleague, on the southern, should animate the desponding spirits; should cashier an ignorant or faithless officer; should bend a mutinous soldier under the yoke of discipline; that he should unite military cares to civil precautions; should pass from the council to the field of battle, from the field of battle to the hospitals, from the hospitals to the administrations; should alternately assist the general and the magistrates; procure for the troops ammunition and provisions; for the inhabitants the protection of the laws; should appease, or prevent, those bloody quarrels, which were so often on the point of destroying the besieged by the hands of the besieged themselves. The indefatigable

tigable wisdom of Rewbell sustained the glory of the French name, as worthily as the impetuous valour of Merlin. If our defenders saw in the latter their Achilles, they beheld in the former their Nestor. Numbers, discipline, persevering eagerness, nevertheless, obtained that success to which they were directed. Our forces were weakened; the cannon made daily breaches in the ramparts; the torrents of fire seemed to inundate the city; our magazines were emptied; famine was on the point of sweeping away thousands of men; the garrison was reduced to the last extremity; they were obliged to capitulate; the gates were opened, and Rewbell returned to the National Convention.

He found there all the passions leagued together, all the parties in a state of furious contention. To lament the scene, and to retire from it, were, happily for him, the same thing.

The insurgents of La Loire, at that time, reckoned the number of their triumphs by that of their combats. They spread far from their homes, as a torrent which nothing can stop; they did not merely contend with our armies, they destroyed them. That of Mentz was opposed to them, Rewbell was re-elected commissioner of it; he continued to share its rigorous destiny. It had obstacles of various kinds to overcome ;

overcome; it was supported by his advice and encouraged by his example. He lived like the army, exposed to the attacks of treachery; to the inclemency of the air; he often passed the day in the midst of flames, and the night on the ground yet moist with blood. To him are due part of the laurels which they reaped; envy itself could not refuse them to him; since he gave the impulse to that column of heroes, whom eighty thousand besiegers, and two hundred pieces of cannon, could not overwhelm; who, less fortunate in the interior, sometimes surprised in detail, sometimes surrounded in the mass, revenged the cause of the people only by multiplying their own misfortunes; who covered the country, which they liberated, with their dead bodies, as well as with their trophies; who melted insensibly away like a refreshing cloud, and fell, in the moment of victory, under the blows of an implacable enemy, whom they had mortally wounded.

His return to the Convention lightened the weight of his labours, but not of his cares. On the banks of the Loire, he deplored the lot of a few legions; on those of the Seine, he had to lament the sufferings of a whole nation; here, the deluded Frenchmen directed the sword against the bosom of their country; there, the usurpers,

G

his

his late colleagues, suspended the axe of their executioners over every head. Ignorance and fury universally reigned: he was marked out as a mal-content, as a rebel. The agents of the police had orders to watch his conduct; more than once it was proposed to decree a mandate of arrest against him. His friends a long while feared for his life. He himself, meanwhile, amidst the most horrible anxieties, in concert with the deputation of the Upper Rhine, preserved his department from the revolutionary rigours, and found the secret of being still useful. On his report, the tyrants were persuaded that they had there no formidable enemy, that their most trifling decrees were there respected; that a thorough confidence was placed in them. "What villainy!" a moral censor may, perhaps, exclaim. What an honourable expedient! I will answer him. When it is impossible to vanquish the tyrants, we must deceive, we must soften them: prayer is no less a virtue than courage, when it delivers an innocent victim from the scaffold. Besides, it is by the effect that we ought, in this case, to judge of the cause. Nor is it yet forgotten that, at this wretched period, the whole empire was crushed beneath the weight of oppression. Thousands of men, lately proclaimed free, were confined in
dungeons,

dungeons, or precipitated into the abyfs of annihilation. Suspicion, menace, death, hovered over every point of our vast territory ; whilst Colmar, and the cities around it, preserved a kind of security. If some tears flowed from the eyes of their inhabitants ; if some arbitrary proceedings excited their sorrow, at least proscription was unknown to them ; at least they were not piled in heaps upon the fatal carriages. Their public squares were not stained with a single drop of blood.

After the fall of the Triumvirs, being named a member of the Committee of Public Safety, he levelled the severest blows against the sect at that time cast down, but appearing ready to rise again more furious, more terrible than before. Every thing announced that the days of our mourning were about to recommence ; a remaining horror froze up the souls of virtuous men. They regarded their victories as the works of chance ; they doubted of their own union, energy, and number ; they saw in themselves only a weak majority, the necessary sport of events, and which might probably be again enslaved, as it had been already mutilated. The plunderers, on the contrary, hardened themselves against a reverse of fortune ; their ferocity was converted into rage, their ambition into madness ; they were determined to reign or to perish ; this was the oath

which they took over the grave of Robespierre. In the midst of them still roared Billaud, Collot, Lejeune, Duhem, and that group of obscure villains surnamed *The Crest*. To whatever place they were pursued, they appeared equally formidable. Their execrations affrighted the Convention, they stopped its progress at every step of its new career. These sectaries applauded only the accents of revolt, the vociferations of crime; they only welcomed such propositions; they only assembled together under the protection of daggers. One of them, pointing to his accomplices and to the virtuous legislators, cried out audaciously, "behold the two parties face to face!" Another announced plainly, that "the lion was on the point of awaking;" that is to say, that new successes awaited the devouring system of anarchy. The political horizon was overspread with gloomy clouds; our fate was almost decided, the prisons, the graves, were about to be re-opened, when the committees of government determined to unite their powers, to combine their talents. The wounds of the state were probed to the bottom; their depth was terrible, but the application of the remedy seemed no less hazardous. To shut up the place of meeting of the Jacobins, seemed, to most of those who deliberated on it, too daring a measure. When the decree which was to authorize

authorize it, was submitted to their examination, the doubts, the objections, were multiplied. Every one seemed to think that in adopting it he was about to decree his own condemnation; uncertainty was in every heart; Rewbell perceived it; he was indignant at it. He enumerated the horrible evils which would be the consequence of so disgraceful a timidity: he painted the future in the colours of the past; he repeated beforehand the cries of the wretched country. At last, joining the energy of action to that of words, he read over the proposition, and signed it first himself. The anarchists remember this; and never will they pardon him for it. It is not with men of his character that they can hope to capitulate. Their hatred for him, as well as his for them, are insurmountable barriers. Let no one, in perusing this work, be astonished to find me repeating so often assertions of this nature; it is only to the superficial reader that they can appear useless. It is not with the agitating Demagogues as it is with the Royalist Conspirators. One would not be extremely surprised that a Member of the Directory should, upon principle, make common cause with the former; for these agitators have no theory of their own; every kind of political machine suits their purpose, provided that the springs are moved according to their wishes; they would even bless the present government, if
it

it restored to them the double privilege of plunder and assassination. But it is impossible to suppose one of our supreme magistrates, a chief of the Republic, so disinterested, so generous, or rather so stupid, as to hold out his hand to the fugitive Pretenders*, to divest himself voluntarily of his credit, his prerogatives, his honours, in order to elevate on their ruins a haughty scion of this or that dynasty. I shall not therefore say in future—this Member of the Directory is hostile to the partisans of Royalty; every one knows, supposes, or imagines that it must be so; but I shall consider all of them in the relation which they bear to the Jacobins. Rewbell had not to fear this kind of comparison. France owes to him the second defeat of those perverse wretches: she owes also to him the famous treaty of the Hague. We had subjected Holland by a kind of enchantment. The rigours of an extraordinary and propitious winter had hardened under the feet of our soldiers those waves which had been opposed, as abysses, against them; our infantry had conquered marine forces, sailors, pilots; a whole fleet beheld itself encircled by our cavalry; a vanquished people had opened their arms to us as friends; they implored our succour, and burnt with desire to range them-

* The appellation commonly given in France to the *foi-disant* Louis XVIII. the Comte d'Artois, &c.

selves by our side under the banners of independence. It was necessary to serve their interests without injuring our own, to unite them to us by the double ties of policy and gratitude. The result of the negociations surpassed our hopes. The treaty concluded a short time after with Prussia, a treaty less advantageous than, perhaps, it ought to have been, but yet a necessary one, and which we received as a benefit, was also the work of Rewbell.

I have considered him as a legislator, a commissioner, a negociator; in the character of governor he is not less admirable. To the purity of his intentions, and the firmness of his principles, he unites that love of labour, that accuracy of judgment, that vigour of mind, that depth of penetration, which characterize the real statesman.

REVELLIERE LEPAUX.

SHOULD you wish to stop the mouth of those irascible declaimers, who, always actuated by the desire of blaming and of hating, undertake to confound every thing by their culpable prejudices; who more enraged at their own disgrace than feeling for the public evils, compare, without shame, the 14th of July to the 31st of May, and
the

the 10th of August to the 2d of September; who no less unjust with regard to men than with regard to things, impudently rank in the same class Buonaparte and Roffignol, Taleyran and the Abbé Châles, Carnot and Vadier; who acknowledge none as honest men but themselves and their friends; none as true heroes but the Chevaliers of Verona; who see in the authors of the Revolution only an impure mass of rebels, anarchists, and malefactors? Should you wish, I say, to make them blush for their ridiculous exaggerations, and, to oblige them to recur to the old adage: *There is no rule without an exception?* Ask them what they think of Louis-Marie Revellière Lepaux, born at Montaigne, in the department of La Vendée, the 25th of August, 1753.

His conduct is a tissue of laudable actions, which envy herself cannot pierce with her darts. Perhaps we shall not find in it that which seizes the admiration of the multitude, and forms, in a short time, a glittering reputation. But in its minutest details, it commands the esteem, charms the reason, and subjugates the heart.

I will not dwell upon the history of his youth. It will suffice to inform the reader that he passed it within the walls of Angers, where he received an excellent education, completed his course of studies, acquired the title of advocate, and went from thence to Paris to attend the Parliament.

liament. This situation suited him on many accounts. It afforded a virtuous man the opportunity of protecting the weak, unmasking the oppressor, and causing the balance of justice to incline to that side which the laws directed. What task could be more worthy of him ! Revellière was, moreover, entitled to expect no small success in it. Without possessing so fertile an imagination, so pure a style as the literati of the first class, he can express his ideas with method and clearness ; his writings always show a solidity of principle, and often possess the charm of decoration. The art of haranguing, without previous examination and preparatory labour, of analysing the subject of a discussion, extempore, an art which depends on several physical qualifications, on a great facility of organs, and, above all, on an excessive confidence, cannot, fairly, be ranked among the advantages with which nature has endowed him. Nevertheless, within the last five years, he has gained some triumphs of this kind ; triumphs so much the more honourable, as he is too judicious to supply the place of ideas by words, that of reasoning by clamour ; and as he owed them only to the accuracy of his genius and the vigour of his logic. Since it is true that the consciousness of our powers precedes in us their display, he might have hoped to pursue

H

with

with distinction the career of the bar. But chicanery had beset it with so many obstacles, which it was so difficult to surmount, without hereditary titles or powerful patrons, without any other eulogists than virtue and talents ; the pride of the celebrated solicitors was so high, the young counsellor was necessitated to court their favour by so abject a servility, by so mean a conduct, that Revellière soon changed his resolution and engaged in another line. The study of the human mind, and philosophy, became his principal occupation. Returning to the department of Maine and Loire, he there attached himself chiefly to that science, so noble, yet so simple ; so engaging, yet so laborious, which serves as a basis to medicine ; which alleviates our sufferings, prolongs our days, brings man nearer to nature, makes him master of her secrets, fills him with admiration for the least works of the Creator, to whom it attaches him by the ties of a pious gratitude. Angers owes to his taste, for the most useful of arts, a botanical garden, of which he was, successively, the founder and the professor : nor is this city backward to acknowledge in him a benefactor of mankind. Not that he took any care to multiply there the number of his administrators. He lived there only a third part of the year, passing eight months

months out of the twelve, in a little commune, called Faye, situated on the Layon. He there consecrated his peaceful days to his wife, his children, and a few neighbouring friends. A reasoner, a philanthropist, an author; he there revolved the history of mankind; there calculated with a sigh, the sufferings of enslaved nations, and the crimes of despotism; he formed to himself, theories of regeneration; meditated, in some sort, on our enfranchisement, and, in fancy, beheld the Revolution. It began. His discourses, his writings, favoured its progress. I know that many persons will allow little merit to such a service, and, perhaps, will esteem him the less for it. But it is not from the tribunal of the passions that I mean to choose his judges. I submit his conduct only to the impartial observer, to the man who refers all the opinions of the moment to the eternal laws of morality; who makes it a point of duty to praise virtue and to condemn vice, on whatever side the glory or the shame may be reflected. Such a man, does not confound the Revolution with its disastrous consequences: he reflects that the common deliverance, the common felicity, seemed ready to crown the efforts of the innovators; that their cause was truly just, since their number included almost the whole of the French nation. If unworthy rivals have seized upon their work,

if they have, for a moment, degraded it, we must not, on this account, condemn its first authors. A picture will render this truth more striking. I meet in a desert a miserable family, they breathe there an unwholesome air; they groan in pain, in debasement; they complain of injustice, of oppression, of wants; their lot affects me; I form the desire, I conceive the hope of moderating its rigour, and I propose to them to seek a new asylum. They follow me, we direct our steps to climates where our species is honoured, where independence awaits us. Already the distance diminishes, we have advanced above half of our way. On a sudden, horrid cries issue from the woods which surround us; a band of robbers fall upon us, sword in hand, disperse, put to flight, or sacrifice us. Those of us that escape from them reach home, affrighted, mangled, covered with dust, with sweat and blood. By a deplorable fatality, the travellers whom I guided were the victims of my care. Is it the less true, that my only crime was that of feeling for their situation, listening to their complaints, exerting myself to the utmost in the sweet and laudable hope of leading them to happiness?

Honoured with the suffrages of a department where all parties rendered justice to his morality, elected to the States General, Revellière carried thither that integrity of principles, and that energy

energy of character, which he has since so often, and so gloriously displayed. The tiers état, the clergy, and the noblesse, still deliberated separately: he was one of those who loudly solicited their union and their formation into a constituent assembly. Between the avengers of the people, and the partisans of the prince, the shock was at that time terrible. He fought in the first rank. He demanded with no less obstinacy, the suppression of the orders. He regarded it as acquired, in point of right, even before the question was discussed: and his conviction was so strong, that he always refused to adopt the distinctive habit, the dress of etiquette.

His public conduct, subsequent to that period, offers few remarkable circumstances. He followed, without deviation, but without celebrity, the straight path of civism and honour. Too philosophical to run after that phantom which is called reputation; too modest to draw upon himself, voluntarily, the scrutinizing eye of the public, and too wise to attempt the hopeless task of converting the wicked, he seldom appeared in the tribune; yet none of his days, none of his moments, were lost to the state. His knowledge, without dazzling, ceased not to diffuse its beams, and served to enlighten the most judicious of his colleagues. In deliberative assemblies, the reputation of a man does not
always

always depend upon the number of his harangues. One who speaks on all subjects, and on every occasion, may never be able to obtain a majority in favour of his sentiments, whilst another, who seems to be afraid of showing himself, and speaks but in a low voice, makes persuasion; as it were, penetrate through the veil in which he is enveloped, influences the minds of men according to his desires, and produces, without effort, rapid movements, and spontaneous decisions. Revellière did not obtain exactly that kind of success; but in all the successes which were gained, he participated. Not a privilege, not an abuse was destroyed, whose extirpation he had not previously advised or demanded. United in heart and in deed with the majority of the legislators, that is to say, with the authors of the social regeneration; he renounced no one of them, he ceased not to emulate their conduct, until he saw them indirectly approve of the arbitrary executions, look with a complacent smile on the burning of castles, and palliate the horror of these outrages, by exclaiming with a cruel voice: "Is the blood which is shed, then, so pure?" Senseless men! who thought not on the consequences of such a system; who let loose the monster anarchy, without foreseeing that he would heap around him a pile of ruins and of carcasses; that, having first slaughtered

their

their adversaries, he would next rush upon themselves, and devour them by piecemeal. When the assembly, of which he was a member, had fulfilled its task, or rather, to speak more accurately, had completed its session, being rendered incapable of re-election, by the provisions of an ill-judged law, he became an administrator of the department of the Maine and Loire, the functions of which office he exercised with an unabated zeal. His fellow-citizens found him still the same; by adding to his reputation, he had not diminished his modesty; by having sat on the summit of power, he had not, in his own opinion, become too great for his new employment. His moral faculties had developed themselves on a grand theatre: his merits had been augmented, but not his vanity. Far different from those reformers, whose chief spring of action was pride; who, speaking incessantly of their country, were thinking incessantly of themselves; who only trampled on the gewgaws of their rivals, in order to add to their own stature; who, proud of having vanquished their masters, wished, in their turn, to be served; who disdained the man of small fortune, humiliated the indigent, and sported with the feelings of the people; who, bending every neck under the yoke of equality, converted their celebrated levelling standard into a sceptre of despotism.

His

His zeal found other opportunities of displaying itself. The inhabitants of La Vendée began to elevate their voices in complaint; they opposed an alarming resistance to the execution of certain laws. Already the flames of discord burnt in those bosoms where they were stirred up by fanaticism. Revellière not only foresaw, but endeavoured to prevent the explosion which menaced those countries. Like the benevolent Jesus, he organized a company of apostles, who, spreading themselves through the country places, on market and fair days, proclaimed the principles of liberty, recommended a love of order, and a respect for property and the legal authorities; and preached moderation and the sweets of fraternity. Unhappily, the best advice is almost always the least followed. Error, ambition, revolt, had also their missionaries; and these found the greatest number of partizans. At their voice, the minds of men were irritated, they arose in rebellion; on all sides crowds collected together, arms were taken up, execrations were poured forth, the cries of death were uttered. Revellière, and his fellow-labourers, owed their safety only to the generous zeal of some Gendarmes.

Nevertheless, commotion spread itself over the whole surface of the empire. From the north to the south, from the west to the east, licentiousness and destruction multiplied their ravages.

The

The revolutionary torrent rolled at a distance the bloody ruins of the throne, and the scattered pages of the new constitution. Those who were unable to re-ascend its course, endeavoured to stop it by strong dykes : they called together the Convention, in whose labours he took part. His tongue pronounced the word Republic with so much the less repugnance, as it had long been engraved in his head and in his heart. But he declared himself a no less irreconcilable enemy to those savage demagogues, whose audacity was so generally seconded, whose outrages were so liberally rewarded. He saw in them only destroyers of the human race—tygers, whom he was anxious to bind in chains. His reflections on the projects, the means, and the character of their chiefs, reflections which he published, and to which he affixed his signature, appeared so bold, so profound, so formidable, that they answered them only by denouncing him as a traitor, and by devoting his head to the steel of the assassin. The piece which contained them is remarkable in many points of view ; it possesses so much justice, so much depth of reasoning, so much foresight ; such an integrity of principle, such a purity of sentiment, that I think it my duty to transcribe it from beginning to end.

*Extract from the Chronicle of Paris. No. 42, page 166,
11th February, 1793.*

ON CROMWELLISM.

A Stranger to every party, unconnected with the leader of any sect, whatever may be my esteem for some of those men to whom that character is attributed; an enemy to all kind of coalition, because interest, ambition, or prejudice, in a short time, make us imagine that our country is confined to the narrow circle of this or that faction; but resolved to exert all my powers, feeble as they are, to save France from every kind of particular domination, whether individual, collective, or local, I have coolly reflected on what has passed, and is passing around us, that I might be enabled to trace out for myself a more certain line of conduct. The following is the result of my observations:

If there do not exist a Cromwell in the Republic, at least it is certain that there exists a degree of Cromwellism. Some of the most striking traits in the policy of that celebrated popular hypocrite, will prove this assertion.

He created a sect of levellers, who, indeed, produced the good effect of degrading royalty; but whose object, on the other hand, was to discredit, in the opinion of the multitude, the true friends

friends of liberty and equality, who, by their talents and skill in the management of affairs, might create and strengthen the Republican form of government. The object of this sect was, beside, to disquiet the citizens with regard to the fate of their families, of their property, of the fruits of their industry, so as to make them regret their ancient state of slavery, and desire again the establishment of an absolute power. Finally, the object of the levellers was also to dishonour the parliament by violent proceedings, by cries of fury, by hurried deliberations, by perfidious attacks continually directed against those members who could give dignity to the senate, and lay the foundations of a solid government. Depraved or hired spectators, men posted at the avenues of the parliament, insulted those members who were pointed out as villains and enemies of the people, because, after subverting royalty, they would not overthrow the state ; because they had revolutionary, and not disorganizing and anti-social dispositions. These spectators, these men seconded the faction of Cromwell wonderfully in his views of degrading the parliament, and bringing it to dissolution without the fear of resistance, either on the part of the multitude, to whom it had been described as chiefly composed of the enemies of the people, or on the part of a more informed class, who

had been made to dread its intentions of annihilating property and industry. In a word, the perfidious Cromwell, the soul of that execrable system, obliged the parliament to bring to trial the traitor Charles before the establishment of a new government, an act in itself just and necessary, but which, by being exercised before its time, gave his ambition a greater chance of success.

It is thus, that after having affrighted all the good citizens, by this contest between vice and virtue, ignorance and knowledge, plunder and property, idleness and industry, licentiousness and liberty ; after having, in short, degraded the national representation, he was enabled to dissolve it without a struggle, and to establish his individual domination on the ruins of the public power. It is thus that the English people, in spite of their ardent love of liberty, were muzzled by him, who constantly called himself their protector and their friend. It is thus, that by artfully alarming the citizens with regard to their property and the fruits of their industry, the government has attempted to muzzle them again. Compare and judge !

Yes, this faction exists in the Republic, this faction, weak in numbers, but strong in audacity ; whose project is either to dissolve the national representation, or to govern it by terror, in order

to reign by its means ; whose plan is also to concentrate the sovereignty on a single point of the empire, because it will then be much more easy for the ambitious to seize it, than if the exercise of that sovereignty should remain equally extended over all the points of the Republic, and if each division should have an equal influence in the political balance. This is the *explanation of the enigma !* This is what they mean by a Republic *one and indivisible !* This is the reason of their continual declamations against a kind of federalism whose existence nobody believes.

But if there are great traits of resemblance between the Cromwell of England, and the oligarchical crew who wish to govern France ; it must be acknowledged there are also marked differences. The men who compose it are, indeed, his equals in villainy, but they have only the audaciousness of crime, they possess not his courage. They can only assassinate, they never could conquer. They are able to confound and to disorganize every thing ; they are unable to re-construct and to govern. Cromwell had an ability and a genius whose force created powerful fleets and armies. The oligarchical crew of France, since it has obtained the administration of the war, has possessed no other secret than that of letting a great part of our armies melt away in three months, notwithstanding the millions

lions lavished by the Convention for their support. Finally, Cromwell, understanding how to direct the reins of government, oppressed, it is true, the body politic, but he preserved it from death ; inasmuch that it retained all the vigour necessary to recover a certain portion of liberty. The oligarchical crew of France, should it obtain the domination, being as supereminently ignorant of political œconomy and general justice, as it is expert in intrigue and impudent in calumny, would lead France to such a state of dissolution, that she would be unable to re-organize herself on a system of freedom, and no other resource would remain to the members of this ruined and completely demolished state, but to give themselves up for ever to be grasped by the sacrilegious hand of an ambitious despot.

Is my country then doomed to that excess of shame and of suffering? No!—It is at least certain that a very great majority of the National Convention wishes to confirm the Republican government by a wise and popular constitution; that Paris, whose inhabitants desire the reign of justice and the laws, will not long suffer itself to be tyrannised over by such an handful of scoundrels; or, finally, that the energy of our departments will soon reduce them to their just situation.

L. M. Revellière Lepaux.

Such

Such a writing has no need to be analysed; any kind of commentary would weaken it. Revellière, in publishing it, secured to himself an everlasting claim to the veneration and gratitude of the French nation.

The more formidable the anarchists became, the more he opposed their execrable designs. And when the evil was at its height, when he saw the temple of the laws demolished; justice sitting in tears, amidst its ruins; the assassins of September placed under the egis of impunity; Marat borne in triumph; the most virtuous servants of the nation, the orators of the Gironde, loaded with chains; the plunderers formed at one time into tyrannical clubs, at another into exterminating battalions; the pikes in their possession, Henriot at their head, and Robespierre in the Committee of Public Safety; fearing to participate indirectly in the evil which vice was about to perpetrate, he abdicated his functions and returned into the mass of citizens. This act may perhaps incur the censure of the judicious, if the danger of such an example, and the consequences which it might produce, be considered. But how laudable, how sacred, are the motives which occasioned it! how can we refuse the title of heroic magistrate to the man who, despairing of being able in future to serve his country, voluntarily lays down the

august

august character with which it had invested him, and tacitly declares to the usurpers, that he despises, that he abhors them, and that he would think himself degraded by sitting near them; who, being able to live in obscurity amongst the executioners, runs, crowned with cypresses, to partake the destiny of the victims? If I possessed authentic details of the sufferings to which he was for fifteen months exposed, I should impose on myself the mournful duty of delineating them; I should enumerate his fears, his wants, his torments; and identifying myself with his situation, I should esteem it gratifying, I should esteem it noble to participate their weight. But vague conjecture ought not to be substituted for accurate details: my task is less to paint than to narrate.

His return into the Convention was a short time subsequent to that of the 73 arrested, and of the 22 outlawed deputies. His abdication was considered to be null, from the single circumstance that it took place at a critical period, during a terrible convulsion: and his colleagues received him with open arms. He hastened to them with renewed zeal; exempt from every malignant passion. He had experienced the horrors of exile and of want; he had lost his friends, trembled for his life. Had vengeance, that sentiment no less natural than impetuous, for a moment overpowered

overpowered the mildness of his affections; had he urged the punishment of those wretches against whom he had such weighty subjects of complaint; had he voted like so many others, for those general measures which strike a whole party at once; perhaps there would not have been room for much surprise at his conduct. The hatred which wickedness inspires, does honour to the just man, and constitutes a part of his virtuous sentiments. And, indeed, to this hatred he was not entirely a stranger. The tribunals were mute; the oppressors of their country, the monsters covered with its plunder, and its blood, remained unpunished: he loudly censured this barbarous clemency, he regarded it as the completion of our evils, perhaps of our crimes. But he no less condemned those arbitrary executions, of which several cities became the horrid theatres; he thought not that murder could be justified by resentment, however legitimate, and that the dagger of rage ought in no case to be substituted for the sword of justice. Whilst there was a general insurrection on all sides against the abhorred sect, whilst their chiefs were arrested, were precipitated into the waves, or beaten to death with clubs; he turned away his thoughts from mournful recollections, and suffered his most cruel enemies to breathe in

K. peace:

peace: his hatred of them seemed to be absorbed in contempt.

If the face of affairs is changed; if our political situation is ameliorated; if wisdom has reconquered some portion of her domain; if extravagant doctrines have given way to practicable theories; if we have a code which protects our persons and our property, we owe it in part to Revellière, who seconding the Commission of Eleven with all his powers, was one of the most laborious, one of the most skilful architects of the constitutional edifice. The principles reduced into a code, toward the end of the third year of the Republic, are those which nature, study, and experience, had long before engraven on his heart. Thus have I heard him developpe them in the national tribune: "France," said he, "France demands of us a tutelary government, which shall, to a certain degree, conciliate different interests and different opinions. Let us distrust the declamations and wild exaggerations of demagogues: let us not run after a vain phantom. The liberty which we require ought to be that of all days, of all times; it ought to be a practical, and, as one may say, an habitual liberty; above all, it ought to be adapted to that portion, to that majority of the people which is composed of men of information

mation and of property. Men of property have in all states a great preponderance. They may be bowed, for a few months, under the yoke of a revolutionary despotism, but they must, sooner or later prevail: the laws which consult their inclinations, are alone such as can resist the efforts of time."

After the combats of Vendémiaire, a faction wished to make the victory their own, to hinder the re-elections, and to postpone the establishment of the new system. It was counteracted in its criminal projects by some orators who deserved the benedictions of the Republic, but whose courage was surpassed by Revellière. In a fitting, as decisive as it was memorable, turning toward those ambitious men whom fear and rage had replaced on the summit of the Mountain, he appalled them by the following apostrophe: "You wish to reign, wretches that you are! you menace the virtuous! how ill do menaces proceed from your mouths! remorse ought rather to haunt you like the furies. Do I not see in the midst of you an individual who, in cool blood, commanded a woman to be shot, after she had been stripped, by his orders, of every article of clothing?"

The public interest prevailed; the constitution was about to be put in activity; the members of the government were to be chosen; the national electors prepared their lists. Several declared to

him that they thought of him, that he would be the object of their choice. He combated their resolution; he opposed to them not a feigned refusal, but a stubborn resistance, which could only be surmounted by a perseverance still more stubborn. So true it is that men of delicacy, men of real merit always conceal from themselves the extent of their faculties, always exaggerate to themselves the extent of their duties.

His sentiments and his discourses, his writings and his actions, were at all times in unison. This has not passed unnoticed. The manner in which he was named Director, sufficiently evinces the estimation in which he is held. The Council of Five Hundred had placed him one of the first in the number of candidates: In the Council of Ancients, out of two hundred and eighteen suffrages, he obtained two hundred and sixteen. When he had taken his place on the eminence of power, the most flattering hopes were founded on him; they have not been deceived. He has maintained his courage no less firmly than his principles; he has not ceased to combat the enemies of social order. The proclamations adopted by the Directory in the most difficult circumstances, have been almost all drawn up by him. Of these the generality have produced the most salutary effects. Some have appeased, and disarmed the inhabitants of La Vendée, by addressing to them these con-

soling

following words: "When a commune shall have given proofs of fidelity, the state of siege shall be replaced by a government purely civil, and you shall thenceforward only have to give yourselves up in peace to your labours. The Directory aspires only at rendering you happy, and solemnly engages to execute what it announces to you." Others have affrighted the conspirators, dispersed the groups, made all the sectaries of anarchy perceive that the thunder lowered over their heads. "Faithful to our duty," said they in one, "we will maintain the constitution with unshaken firmness. We will make public order respected: we keep our eyes fixed on those who attempt to trouble it; and we will repress their movements with all the force given to us by those laws with whose execution we are entrusted. Incapable of being the accomplices or the instruments of any faction, we will return with honour into the private life which awaits us, or we will perish with glory at our posts." All these proclamations have augmented the security of the good citizens. The reader who is a friend to truth, may indeed accuse them of employing too frequently the denomination of Royalist. It had been lavished so prodigally under the reign of the Proscribers, that a legitimate authority ought to have shewn itself more sparing of it. By employing it unadvisedly there was danger of running upon a double rock. On the

one

one hand, it gave the plunderers cause to believe that it was thought dangerous to mark them out by their true characters ; on the other, it irritated a party which, at that time, it would have been better to have treated as auxiliary forces. Placed between two hostile factions, the patriots should not attack them both at once. Their efforts when united are formidable ; they become an immense weight, in attempting to raise which we incur the hazard of being crushed.

As a private man, Revellière equally deserves our homage. His inclinations are simple, his manners pure, his affections mild. He may serve as a model not only to the citizen, the magistrate, or the legislator, but to the father, the husband, the friend. Time and his allotted destiny will take from him a great portion of authority, and of honours, his guards, his palace, his directorial purple : but his virtues will remain, and he will have suffered no real loss.

BARRAS.

EXAGGERATION and hatred are, perhaps, in our present circumstances, the most dangerous enemies that we have. The latter degrades our sentiments, the former deranges our ideas: the one

one is for ever pointing out to us criminals and sufferings, the other is for ever advising vengeance and punishment. Both set man in opposition to man, eternize our dissensions, and make of the French soil, as it were, one vast field of bloodshed. In vain are our vows directed to the re-establishment of social harmony; vows alone are insufficient: if we wish it to revive, let us sacrifice to the state a great part of our recollections; let us substitute hope for regret; let us at least agree, that after five years of political uncertainty, as no one of us can declare himself exempt from mistakes, errors, or faults, we have need of a mutual indulgence. It is time that the citizen should attach himself to the magistrate. But such an union would discourage the ambitious; they would make every attempt to prevent it, and they would succeed but too well. We view men in power only through the prism of prejudice: distrust, and contempt are the only food of our minds. Hence that general uneasiness, that desire of change, which seems every day ready to bring on us the horrors of a new subversion. I shall not infer that we ought to intoxicate with flattery the chiefs of the Republic; that we ought to deify Paul Francis John Nicholas Barras. But I think it of importance to render public the good which he has done, in order to give tranquillity to a people still alarmed, in order to take from the wicked

wicked their criminal hope of engaging him in their conspiracy.

It is true that his calumniators have for a long time marked him with unlimited reprobation. According to them, it is impossible, without the most culpable partiality, to write a word in his favour. But they have also said, they have repeated a hundred times, that his new functions were incompatible with his age, that he governed in contempt of the constitutional laws. Their conjectures on this head were even changed into certainty; they looked on his silence as a confession, and, finally, they gave him the surname of *The Young Director*. If they were mistaken on this point, may they not have deceived themselves on others? Would not prudence and justice require of us a further examination. Barras was born at Foxemphoux, in the department of the Var, on the 30th of June, 1755; he was proclaimed a member of the Directory on the 25th of October, 1795; and consequently he was at that period forty years and near four months old. The first charge, therefore, alledged against him, and daily repeated as certain, is only an established error, a consecrated falshood. In the course of these memoirs, we shall clearly see to what the other accusations may be reduced.

Before philosophy had levelled the different ranks, Barras might have been proud of his ancestors.

cestors. No man is, at the same time, such a plebeian in heart, and such a patrician in origin. In the country where he first saw the light, daily homage was paid to the antiquity of his name and the bravery of his ancestors; it was said of the best titled families, they are as noble as the Barras', and of the Barras', they are as old as the rocks of Provence.

Fortune had opened to him the career of arms; his inclinations led him to embrace it; and he entered into the service. He first acted as volunteer in the Dragoons of Languedoc, he soon obtained a commission, and went to the Isle of France with his relation, the governor of that island. War seemed ready to break out in India; the desire of facing its dangers made him enter, in 1775, into the regiment of Pondicherry. He obtained the rank of lieutenant in 1780, and that of captain in 1784. The latter devolved to him by order of seniority. Until this time his conduct presents nothing remarkable. He had indeed exhibited some proofs of valour, and had given into some of the errors of youth.

In 1776 he embarked on board a ship, called the Duc de Duras. This vessel, surprized by a tempest, was wrecked, about midnight, not far from the Maldivé islands. The dangers of the sea are, it is well known, the most terrible of any; the bravest mariner loses the use of his senses,

L

when

when the wind carries away his sails, and breaks his masts ; when the machine, to which his destiny is intrusted, bursts its sides, and converts itself into an abyfs. Ready to descend into the wide and watery grave, he has only strength enough left to direct his vows to heaven. In the present instance, however, the crew retained a certain degree of energy. Barras animated their hopes. It was proposed to construct a raft: in such cases most propositions are passed unanimously. The crew set to work immediately: they put together some planks, they fastened them, the raft was set afloat, and every one sought his safety upon it. All hastened to secure places, all crowded upon it at once. Barras, alone, coolly awaited his turn. He wished to see his companions in misfortune all embarked, all saved before himself. He escaped, one of the last, from the horrors of a danger continually increasing. At length they push off; the vessel is left a prey to the waves, and the little colony, thanks to their floating bridge, land on a savage island. There they suffered the most dreadful hardships, consumed the small portion of provisions which they had preserved ; and, at last, had nothing but a little spoiled rice left to eat. The natives of the country obliged them to keep themselves continually on their guard ; and seemed every instant ready to attack them. Scarcely
did

did they dare to quench their thirst, lest the savages, according to their custom, should have poisoned the fountains and pools. It was not till after a month of the most wretched existence, that is, not till after an age of misery, that assistance reached them, and that they were conveyed to the coast of Coromandel. Barras arrived at Pondicherry in want of every thing; without stockings, and almost without clothing. He fought there during the siege which that city sustained against the English. General Belcombe employed him constantly on the most important expeditions. In a decisive sortie, which the besieged attempted as an effort of despair; he entrusted to him the direction of the column of attack. Some confusion in the orders, and some imprudent eagerness in advancing, threw our ranks into disorder. The front of the column which was marching to the attack gave way, retreated, and was closely pursued by the besiegers. The field of battle was already strewed with our dead, our troops, flying in confusion, blocked up the defiles which led to the city. Barras, at the head of his division, sustained the fiercest shock of the enemy, checked their impetuosity, forced them to keep within their entrenchments, succeeded in rallying the fugitives, and gave the French time to effect their retreat. When Pon-

dicherry, attacked by sea and land, pressed by fire and sword, opened its gates to the English, he still defended the post entrusted to his valour. But his efforts were no longer of any avail: he left that country, and set sail for France.

Off Cape St. Vincent, the vessel in which he was, and which was called the *Sartine*, had to sustain a combat of the most unequal, the most odious nature. Although it had hoisted a flag of distress, an English vessel hailed it, and overwhelmed it with discharges of artillery. The crew, struck with surprise and dread, knew not how to resist; every shot added to their disorder, and threatened entirely to destroy them: they opposed, to formidable broadsides, nothing but cries and lamentations; every one gave himself up for lost, when Barras rushed through the midst of a torrent of fire toward a white flag which hung at the stern of the *Sartine*, and which served as a pretext for the brutal fury of the assailants. By tearing down, with his own hand, this signal of death, he prevented a total destruction; for the vessel was already on the point of sinking.

On his arrival in France, anxious to encounter new dangers, he embarked on board the squadron of Admiral Suffrein. He was at the engagement of St. Jago, where he displayed the
greatest

greatest coolness in the midst of the most terrible dangers. Subsequently to this expedition, he contended against the government in general, and the minister Castries in particular, with an energy prematurely distinguished. At that time, every one of us, in the presence of our superiors, had the timidity of a subject; he carried, perhaps, too far the loftiness of a free man. I say too far, because experience has proved to us, that by attacking the depositaries of power, we prepare the triumph of anarchy, and that anarchy, when triumphant, showers down upon empires every kind of evil at once. Other events led him to the Cape of Good Hope, where he served under General Conway. He undertook to defend the honour of the soldier, (oppressed without pity and without shame) against military despotism. This philanthropic zeal was badly rewarded. In spite of the advantages which his birth gave him, he was accused of a breach of discipline, and branded as guilty of insubordination. The court had done more: in consequence of some struggles, too bold without doubt, and the cause of which I have related, it had issued arbitrary orders against him, which, however, were not put in execution. Hence it was that the Revolution found him, as might be expected, ready to second all its endeavours; for among nations in a state of crisis, the love of the government

ment which is arising, is little more than the hatred of the government which has been overthrown.

From the commencement of 1789, he wrote against the disorders of the courtiers; he exposed the baseness of their protectors. If I do not point out more particularly the persons against whom his first attacks were levelled, it is because resentment is not justice; and because the man of integrity, whatever cause he may have embraced, respects misfortune, and does not seek, with a sacrilegious foot, to trample on the ashes of the dead. On the 12th, 13th, and 14th of July, he joined the noble band of insurgents who reduced the Bastille. After the Revolution, he served as administrator of the department of the Var; and as civil commissioner of the army of Italy. He was appointed member of the High Court, that tribunal which was to have judged at Orleans the Duke de Brissac, and several other persons of distinction, but which was spared so rigorous a service. The prisoners were ordered to Paris, and in their way thither fell by the daggers of a band of assassins. Before this fatal event, Barras had dared to demand the deposition of the King; a bold opinion, which, at that time, could have found few supporters, but which, nevertheless, does honour to his foresight. In adopting it, the subsequent struggles would

would have been avoided ; the throne would have been broken in pieces without the assistance of the multitude ; the power, instead of being annihilated, would have only changed hands ; one government would have been substituted for another, and anarchy would have been weighed down by the pressure of the law. His courageous zeal contributed very effectually to the victory of the 10th of August. He distinguished himself among the principal actors of that day : and the intolerance of the malcontents would be blameable, were they to charge him with this as a crime. Courage is always valuable, and its value is independent of this or that opinion. Whoever, having embraced the side which he thinks the best, defends it with energy, merits the esteem of his rivals. Charette thought differently from me ; I desired his destruction, I fought against him, but I never despised him.

Elected to the Convention, Barras obtained from it the title of commissioner, and repaired to the department of the Lower Alps, to hasten the recruiting. He was on mission on the 31st of May, and learnt the outrages of the factious only from their own reports. They painted their victims to him as culpable enemies, real conspirators ; and the detestable success of their party as the triumph of his country. According to them, they were to save every thing ; their
power

power was the port open to all, during the tempest : the journals of that time were sold to them ; their echoes alone, were permitted to be heard. They deceived Barras, as they did so many others ; or, to speak more accurately, they kept him in ignorance of every thing. Besides, the state of circumstances was imperious. A general convulsion would have completely destroyed the state. Whether through blindness, or weakness he consented to receive the impulse from them. It was, indeed, terrible : it produced, in general, atrocious crimes, and prodigious exploits : let us consider it with relation to Barras.

On all sides, insurrections took place against the conquering party, the detestable party of Marat and Robespierre. No one would acknowledge, as the central and supreme authority, a body mangled and mutilated in its soundest members. From the midst of the great cities arose menacing clamours, cries of war. Their inhabitants threatened to form themselves into avenging phalanxes, and to rush against Paris ; an insurrection, laudable and sacred in its principle, but which must have been disastrous in its consequences. In fact, the traitors, from that time, reigned despotically ; they at once decreed and executed the law ; they directed at their will, the treasures and the armies of the state ; they had
in

in their favour a perfect unanimity, and immense resources. Our insurgents in the departments, on the contrary, wanted provisions, arms, money, and union. They hastened along the same road ; but their wishes led them toward points diametrically opposite. Some of them were eager to join the rebels in La Vendée, others swore to combat every enemy of the new laws ; Lyons proposed to elevate the throne ; Bourdeaux only aspired at consolidating the Revolution ; the fugitive deputies took the honourable title of Republicans ; and Wimpfen, the General whom they placed at the head of their battalions, was a Royalist. I do not hesitate to affirm, that at that period a complete submission could alone moderate the horror of our fate. If it is always glorious to punish the wicked, it is not always prudent to irritate them. In the political theatre, as in the field of war, it is, sometimes, right to give ground to one's adversary, to fall back before him, in order to attack him afterwards with advantage, and to make him tremble in his turn. Many Frenchmen acted without foresight, they fell into repeated errors, some of them committed real crimes : Toulon gave itself up to the English. —To the English ! those barbarians, who only entered it to bind in chains the Republicans, to destroy our arsenals, to reduce our fleet to ashes.

M

This

This act of treason had dreadful consequences ; the example seemed to be contagious. Already a communication was established between the traitors of the naval force, and those of the army. Brunet, the general, was hastening to second the Admiral Trogoff: one wished to receive the English into his camp, as the other had into his ports. Barras, informed of these plots, prevented their execution by a proceeding, the boldness of which astonishes even his calumniators. He was pursued on all sides ; the tocsin was sounded against him ; his person was insecure ; his property was ravaged ; a price was set upon his head. Arriving at Pignans, he was attacked in his carriage ; he seized his sabre, and seconded by two dragoons, who alone remained faithful to him, he escaped from his opponents, leaped on horseback, and hastened to St. Tropès. He there declared his powers to an officer of marine, named Martin, and to the Mayor of Hallier ; procured, by their assistance, a small vessel and some sailors ; put to sea by night ; approached Nice under favour of the darkness ; arrived there unexpectedly, presented himself boldly before the criminal associates of a foreign power, and dared to arrest Brunet at the head of his army. His efforts, his exhortations, at length awakened in the breasts of the soldiers a hatred of the English

English name ; he recalled them all to their duty ; restored them all to their country. Together with them, he marched against Toulon, that guilty city, but whose sufferings have fully expiated its guilt. He organized the troops which hastened in crowds against its walls. Whilst his four colleagues gave the impulse on the right, he directed it alone on the left. He mounted, sword in hand, to the assault of fort Pharon, and penetrated into the city, after two days and two nights of watching, fatigue, and combats.

To such exploits, to such admiration, succeed the most afflicting severities, the most painful sensations. I am obliged to call to mind the idea of them ; I will not trace their picture. Often enough has that painful task been fulfilled by others ; often enough, have others involuntarily prepared new triumphs for licentiousness, by dividing the citizens, by filling the hearts of one party with hatred, and those of another with fear. At the end of a revolution it is necessary that morality should remain, in certain respects, subordinate to policy. There are details which a wise man obliges himself at such a time to forget ; the agitators, on the contrary, recal them to mind with a perfidious address. I think I hear their echoes repeating every instant in the ears of Barras—" The Royalists have perished, during

your million, at Toulon; the men of integrity know this; they will never pardon you. Cease to make a common cause with them; by saving them you destroy yourself." I trust that he will not be the dupe of these deceitful prophecies. More sincere, more consoling in mine, I will say to him, as I have said to the government, men of integrity are the only equitable judges. They alone, I will add, calculate, how far men are controuled by circumstances; they ought not to be confounded with their pretended interpreters, those furious wretches always armed with the sword of vengeance. They weep, it is true, over the ruins of the south; but they remember that you were not at Paris, when the plunderers seized with their bloody hands the reins of empire, that their communications with you were cut off, for three months, by the Marseilloise army; that you were at last deceived by unfaithful reports; that, moreover, Toulon had invited within her walls our most cruel enemies; that the English flag had waved on her citadels; that you found there our laws trampled under foot, two of your colleagues in chains; that your orders were executed by the light of that vast conflagration which devoured our magazines, our fleet, and our arsenals. It is the sect of villains that you ought to fear; their principles have long been known: lenity is in their eyes only a contemptible weakness; who-
ever

ever has for an instant displeased them is to them a detested enemy. In their mysterious examination, they require of men in power an account of their minutest actions; they offer them the exclusive choice of two different rewards, the civic palm or the branch of cypress. For them there is no medium; they either bless or execrate, they deify or proscribe. If their reign should return, Thibaudeau and Tallien would ascend the same scaffold—I re-assume the course of my narration.

The prisons of Marseilles were to have been violated: the prisoners were threatened with a general massacre. Barras exposing himself to the hatred of Robespierre and his associates, caused Guiraud and Mayer, the authors of this detestable plot, to be arrested. He sent them to Paris, to be brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. At that time much less was sufficient to cause the disgrace of a public functionary. The tyrants did not overlook this: they wished to seize him; three times did they sign mandates of arrest against him. But the execution appeared to them hazardous: they dreaded the efforts of an impetuous despair, of a tried and steady valour. On this occasion their timidity prolonged their suspense. Barras remained at liberty: and they had soon reason to repent of it. He ceased not to speak openly of their proceedings, with the accent of indignation.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the information he received, he would not quit his residence, even for a night. He, however, put himself in a state of defence; he signified to his enemies that he would kill any of their satellites who should attempt to arrest him. They then endeavoured to get rid of him by other means; they wished to send him to the army of the Rhine. He refused, declaring that his presence was necessary in the Convention. This was true; he served the Convention on the 9th of Thermidor (July 27th) with a decisive success. He spoke last in the debate which preceded the punishment of the traitors. He climbed on a bench, and darting from thence into the Tribune, conjured his colleagues instantly to rise, that they might save their country. Although the Journals mention nothing of this action, and this expression, it is certain that he contributed to determine the arrest of Robespierre. He did more; he accepted the command of the armed force. During the whole night he traversed that immense city, where the inhabitants were assembling tumultuously and taking up arms; where the satellites of crime, and the avengers of humanity, were confounded together in their march; where terrible voices cried to them on one side: *succour the Convention!* on the other, *rally around the Commune!* where a whole people seemed ready to plunge itself into the abyss of annihilation. He had

had raised his dagger against tyranny in the senate, in the field of honour he overpowered it with his sword. In vain do ungrateful men suggest, that his principal motive was personal safety. By these odious subtleties, doubts may be raised with regard to the best actions, the most illustrious services; morality becomes a problem: by this reasoning, Pichegru no longer merits the title of a hero; he appears only as an ambitious man, desirous of elevating himself to the highest pitch of glory; and, in like manner, the rich man who empties his purse into the hand of the indigent, is only actuated by a selfish desire of varying his pleasures, and of tasting the satisfaction of a tranquil conscience. During several hours, the General of Thermidor braved the roarings of a furious horde, the popularity of the dictator, the sword of Henriot, and the artillery of his formidable cannoneers. He showed himself in every spot where the danger was imminent, where the courage of the good citizens needed to be re-animated; he would not quit the field of battle until the cause of the nation was victorious; until the usurpers had expiated by a terrible death the enormities of an execrable life. In a word, he may be looked upon as the chief actor in that day, which opened thousands of prisons, which closed thousands of graves.

He

He has since contended against those men of too great irascibility, who look on generosity as a weakness, forgiveness as a crime. He has opposed with all his power, the disastrous effect of private resentment. He shewed himself to advantage on the 12th of Germinal*, on the 5th of Prairial†, and on every occasion of importance. "Yes, even in Vendemiaire," will the crowd of his enemies exclaim. Since they have made the observation, I shall not contradict them; whilst I continue my dissertation on men, I shall omit my sentiments with regard to events.

The Triumvirate being destroyed, thanks were universally given to the Convention; its praises were re-echoed in the theatres and public places. But every thing here below is temporary, and unfortunately gratitude is subject to the common law. An unforeseen error, a puerile incident, destroyed this valuable harmony. In one of its sittings, the convention, incited by a patriotic enthusiasm, decreed that the hymn of the victors should be again brought into celebrity; that hymn which the sect of murderers had for a moment seized on, as they had seized on our arms; but which had confirmed the valour of our heroes, which had made our enemies tremble, and which the nation had applauded, even before

* April 1.

† May 24.

before the assassins conceived a hope of triumph. Immediately, senseless or perfidious men asserted, that they wished to rebuild the edifice of terror.

The timid citizens were alarmed; and alarmed led to outrage. They rushed in crowds to the square of the Caroussel: they environed the Tuilleries, the hymn was not executed: a decree was reviled, and violated even under the porticoes of that palace, where, on the preceding evening, it had been passed by the legislature. Resentment presently made a rapid progress in the minds of both parties. The Convention was regarded only as a band of villains; the *Crest*, the *Thermidorians*, the *Federalists*, were condemned in one common decree. They became irritated in their turn; they persuaded themselves that Paris was peopled by none but counter-revolutionists. The future was, to their eyes, overspread with gloomy clouds; they were instigated by fear to attempt to retain their power. They proclaimed the laws of the 5th and 13th of Fructidor*. These laws seemed, at the first view, an attack upon the rights of the people; and yet they favoured the establishment of the constitutional government. As a representative I should have opposed them, as a citizen I gave them my suffrage. In the critical state in which we then were, such a proceeding

* August 22, and 30.

seemed to me most prudent. Others thought differently from me; I am far from censuring them. Had the Primary Assemblies of Paris unanimously rejected the re-election of the *Two Thirds*, had they even rejected the constitution itself, I should have thought their conduct in those respects unimpeachable. But they declared themselves permanent; this was their first error; they spoke as sovereigns, this was their first fault; they organised themselves into battalions, this was their first crime. The chiefs who misled them, will never be able to exculpate themselves. Will they say that the assemblies were composed, in general, of worthy individuals? This is acknowledged. That they were guided only by their own impulse? All France denies it. That no outrage would have sullied their success? This assertion is little better than absurdity. What! did you set afloat every passion? Blind declaimers! did you light in every heart the devouring flames of vengeance? Did you put at once in motion fifty thousand men, without discipline, without subordination, without union? Did you, after putting arms into their hands, point out to them a small number of adversaries, and say: "Behold the executioners of your country!" And did you notwithstanding imagine that every one of them would scrupulously respect the feeble barriers of morality? Undeceive yourselves!

selves! It is easy to produce an insurrection: it is difficult to direct it. They who are freed from the bonds of society, follow only natural impulse: the passionate man threatens, the man of brutality strikes, the man of cruelty assassinate. I have in my own mind the clearest conviction, if victory had ranged herself under your standards, that murders would have been committed; that the senate would have been dissolved; that the factionaries, whilst scarcely masters of the field of battle, would have divided themselves; that some would have demanded the establishment of the constitution, others the restoration of the monarchy; that these latter would have differed in their wishes, and would have fought for the choice of a despot; that three or four parties would have been formed; that the departments and the armies would have taken part in these terrible struggles; in short, that fury would have again torn the entrails of our country. Since such would have been the probable consequences of the attack, resistance was just. Resistance is indeed a natural right. It is permitted against the wicked and even against the virtuous. If Socrates were alive, and were to direct a sword against my life, if I were sure that the blow would reach me; should I not hasten to prevent it, and (though with regret) to pierce his heart?

I will not, however, celebrate a victory, but too memorable, but too dearly purchased. I will not hold it up to Barras as a proper subject of exultation. Few are the admirers of those laurels which a civil war produces. He who reaps them, far from binding them upon his brows, ought to offer them up, moistened with his tears, upon the altar of his country.

It is upon his conduct, after the combat, that I find it pleasant to enlarge. A furious soldiery, intoxicated with wine and blood, spread themselves through every quarter of the city, affrighted the citizens, threatened to violate the sanctuary of their houses, and imperiously demanded, as the recompence of their labours, a general pillage. He redoubled his efforts to restrain them. He passed the night at the out-posts. Some were recalled to the laws of honour by his exhortations: others were arrested by his orders; all beheld the severest chastisement hanging over them: he proclaimed that those who violated persons or property should be instantly shot. It was he also who recommended the disarming of those cannibals who had been disgorged into the field of combat by the prisons, and of whom policy at that time made use, as an admiral uses red-hot shot.

Resentment and prejudice have nevertheless persisted in pursuing him in his new career. At
three

three different periods has his arm been raised against the conspiring demagogues; but no one seems willing to remember this. It has been pretended that he approved their systems, that he favoured their plots. How improbable an accusation! how can it be believed that a man in the highest elevation of power should become a conspirator? A conspirator is almost always instigated by ambition; and the ambitious man is ever anxious to change his situation; but one who is so exalted cannot change his situation without degradation. If the anarchists, when victorious, had given themselves a chief, their choice would doubtless have fallen on a man in their eyes irreproachable: they would have proclaimed Amar or Vadier, Duhem or Billaud. Finally, the secrets of the heart are mysteries, which time alone can penetrate. The enemies of Barras then determined to wait. Useless caution! No discovery has justified their conjectures. Barras voted, like his colleagues, for the closing of the Pantheon, for the dispersion of the incendiary groups, for the arrest of Babœuf. He showed himself even more rigorous than them with regard to the revolted legions. His advice was, that they should be either disarmed with disgrace, or executed by martial law. It has been said that the plots of the 21st of Floreal*, had

* May 10.

had they succeeded, would not have been directed against him: the rebels had determined differently. Rossignol had personally undertaken to seize him with his own hand; he had promised his head to the conspirators. It has been also asserted, that he was absent from the Luxembourg during the attack of the Camp of Grenelle: this is a fact which, as well as his age, has been falsely stated.

If I am asked to what cause I attribute these numerous errors of the public, (the public often too severe, but nevertheless judicious, and still more remarkable for the accuracy of its feeling than for the severity of its decisions) this is what truth obliges me to answer. Barras, in the choice of his connections, has not sufficiently followed the example of his colleagues; and this has sometimes made appearances seem against him. Certain men, destitute of honour, had a share by their suffrages in his elevation: he thought himself bound to make some return to them; he has therefore remained, to a certain degree, dependant on them: he has acted wrong. Gratitude is a generous and sacred sentiment; in a private individual it would continue to be virtuous even if it degenerated into a weakness. But governors, supreme magistrates, ought to be directed by more certain guides. Their personal feelings ought to give way to the general interest. He
who

who would worthily support the weight of power, must disdain trifling considerations, must subject, and even sacrifice them to his duties, must have no other counsellor than the law, no other friend than the people.

The deference which he paid to some of those men, appeared so much the more dangerous, as they have long been the objects of general distrust, as their systems are no less dreaded than their actions are detested. The new order of things is, as is well known, their continual theme of abuse; they are continually crying out against the oppression of the patriots; they behold in every man of property a Royalist, in every young Frenchman a knight of the poniard; according to them, a counter-revolution is approaching in the cities, and has actually taken place in the country; and the nation, their sovereign, is in their eyes, only a vast mob of conspirators. As they are no strangers to the art of persuasion, it may not be useless to oppose to their obscure sophisms, a few clear and precise ideas.

Undoubtedly an odious minority, which had covered itself with our spoils, and bathed itself in our tears, has now become the object of disgust and dread. It well deserves this lot. Let us, nevertheless, avoid all acts of persecution, all excesses of violence; let us not suffer its victims to become its executioners. But let us beware that
we

we restore it not to the credit which it has lost. Let us not be stupid enough to argue that, because it has served the revolution, it must be therefore useful in consolidating it. The instrument with which we demolish, is not that which we employ in rebuilding. The true patriots commanded in the combat ; and the glory is theirs. If they wish not to sully it, they must in future reject their unworthy auxiliaries : I will say more ; they must change them. When the subversion of the throne was to be attempted, we were obliged to unloose against them all the daring innovators, all the ferocious cut-throats that France possessed ; if we wish to support the existing government, it can only be done by embodying in its defence, all the wise, enlightened, and virtuous citizens. The factious were for five years our chief satellites ; the friends of liberty are become our necessary allies. If they even differ from us in opinion, they are attached to us by interest ; interest, whose empire over the generality of minds is much stronger than that of opinion. It is impossible to imagine that an anarchist can ever be attached to the constitution. On the contrary, eight Royalists, out of ten, will perhaps complain, but they will submit to our wishes, when they see our laws flourishing, their own persons at ease, their property secure. At least it is certain that reason, history, and all writers, ancient and modern, concur in this opinion.

opinion. These two parties are no longer equally dangerous: the former is composed of agitators, to whom commotion is an object of desire; of madmen who reckon obstacles as nothing; of frantic wretches who, as I have somewhere said, would precipitate themselves into an abyss, if they were sure to be drowned in blood: the latter consists almost entirely of artizans, writers, traders, men of property, whose hands are in some sort tied by the bonds of education or of fortune. The former, should you cut them in pieces, would continue to move like the serpent; a single shot would disperse the latter, like a flight of birds. These ideas are very different from those of the men whom I just now mentioned; but I flatter myself that they are such as must appear to Barras preferable. So long as these men live in an apparent intimacy with him, his conduct will only present to the anxious eyes of the public, the cloud of obscurity. Several of them have already learnt that he desired not their predictions, their advice, or even their company. Let him give the same information to the rest. He has begun, let him finish. Suspicions, injurious to his sentiments, will vanish away like a mist. It is to be observed, however, that I accuse but a small number of individuals; I pay due homage to the generality of his associates. I know that he takes a lively interest in the arts; that he re-

O

ceives

ceives artists with the most liberal welcome ; that he reckons among his friends, men of the greatest prudence, information, and integrity ; particularly the worthy Bergoing, who was twice honoured with the suffrages of La Gironde ; who was so long proscribed by the plunderers ; and who is the sole and venerable relic of an illustrious deputation.

The moral character of Barras has been often sketched ; but without producing a true portrait. By assigning to him the opinions of a revolutionary demagogue ; it has been insinuated that he is disobliging, passionate, vindictive, and brutal. Not one of these epithets is applicable to him. His manners, without resembling those of the old court, are attentive and pleasing. He gives entertainments, not so much from inclination as from reason ; because he thinks it right that a member of the government should be surrounded with a certain degree of splendour. All those who partake of them return home equally pleased with his conduct ; to every one he has shown some mark of politeness, to every one he has addressed some obliging expression. No one is more zealous in serving a friend, or even a stranger. His education has been that of a soldier ; he does not pretend to be a scholar ; and yet he both converses, and judges with propriety. Guarded in his expressions, and saying little him-
self,

self, he excels in the art of drawing conversation from those around him, and of learning their sentiments. He has the credit of having discovered the merit of Buonaparte ; his penetrating eyes perceived the hero under the modest veil of the soldier as yet undistinguished. Though you had endeavoured to injure, to destroy him, he would not attempt to retaliate. He has proved, that he is able to conquer the most natural resentment. After the events of Vendemiaire, he received, with benevolence, the wife of St. Julien, one of the most hot-headed *sectionaries* ; he compassionated the lot of her husband ; he promised that he would use all the means in his power to save him ; he caused the seals, which excluded him from his residence, and from the means of his defence, to be taken off. During the reign of terror, whilst he was marching to the conquest of Toulon, some inhabitants of the department of the Var attacked his house, sought him in the obscurest recesses, swearing to sacrifice him wherever he should be found. The Convention, informed of this crime, issued a decree against them, and caused them to be conveyed to the prisons of Paris. Their liberation was the first which he solicited, and signed in the Committee of General Safety. He has been thought ambitious ; and it is true that, on occasions of emergency, he has twice accepted the command in chief ; but each time, after the danger, he laid it down as a trou-

blesome burden. More than one reason authorizes me to believe, and even to assert, that he would long since have voluntarily quitted his present station, had it not been for the unjust fury of his implacable enemies. He is a gladiator desirous of repose, who will break in pieces his weapons when he is no longer challenged to the combat. Courage, that mental energy so much venerated by all nations, particularly by the French, is also to be ranked amongst his qualifications. The general turn of his manners is mild and tranquil; scarcely would he ever disturb the harmony which reigns around him; but when any necessity draws him from that kind of calmness, when any important circumstance obliges him to concentrate his faculties, he obtains a powerful influence over the destiny of an empire. In short, he has received from nature a sufficient goodness of heart to love virtue, a sufficient clearness of mind to discern it, a sufficient vigour of character to perform its dictates. These advantages are precious. O thou, in whom I behold them united, neglect not to cultivate them! above all, employ the means afforded thee by thy exalted station; advantages which so soon will pass away! reproaches will be hurled against thee: answer them only by an unshaken attachment to the cause of French virtue! He who is invested with extensive powers, may easily distinguish himself by illustrious actions.

CARNOT.

CARNOT.

“**A** **NOTHER** long history!” will be, without doubt, the exclamation of the noisy herd of censors, and of modern declaimers. “Men, whatever they may be, are not worth the trouble of discussion: in a free country measures are every thing.” This maxim has been, it is true, a long time in vogue; when will it be reduced to practice? Wherever I turn my looks, to whatever point I direct my thoughts, I behold laws arising and declining according to the influence of wisdom, of error, of passion: I am convinced that the governors are always to a state, what the Supreme Regulator is to the Universe. It is of importance, then, to fathom the recesses of their hearts. By studying their moral faculties, by identifying ourselves with their sentiments, we unfold the records of futurity; we learn what we have to fear, and what we may be permitted to hope.

Lazare-Nicholas-Margueritte Carnot was born in the town of Nolay, in the department of La Côte-d'or, on the 13th of May, 1753. His father, a respectable old man who is still living, exercised there the profession of an advocate. His family, which was esteemed one of the most ancient in the neighbourhood, enjoyed a degree
of

of respectability, founded not on titles, but on personal merit.

In his youth, he devoted himself to the profession of an engineer. His time was divided between the abstruse sciences and the *belles lettres*. The pursuit of the latter served as a relaxation from the study of the former. He wrote several mathematical essays, which at the time of their publication procured him honourable rewards, and which have lately opened to him the door of the National Academy. His eulogium on Marshal Vauban, is written with strength and clearness: it obtained the prize from the Academy of Dijon. Carnot was a member of that academy, as well as of that of Arras, and correspondent of the Museum of Paris. In the *Almanach des Muses*, from the year 1787 to that of 1792, several of his compositions are to be found, which give proofs of experience in composition, cultivation of mind, and delicacy of taste*. But these verses, however pleasing, seemed not to promise their author a very brilliant lot; much less to lead him to the summit of power. Between a lively poet and a benefactor of his country, the interval is immense; that interval Carnot has passed. In vain did calumny a long while endeavour to overwhelm him with her hateful burthen. He re-assumed the attitude which be-

* See the Appendix.

came him; he arose with dignity; and a general satisfaction appeared on the countenances of all who beheld him. Appearing in a more public situation, open to a more general scrutiny, he has found advocates even among those men who attacked him with the greatest fury.

His conduct as a Member of the Directory having dissipated the thick clouds of prejudice; equity has, though late, consented to rejudge his actions. Her hands unfolded the bloody registers of the Committee of General Safety. The name of Carnot presented itself indeed to her eyes; but the more she multiplied her researches, the more she was convinced that he never acted in concert with his ferocious colleagues; that he had as small a share in their crimes as they had in his glory; that he was preparing the defeats of the Royal Invaders, whilst they were drawing up their lists of proscription; in short, that he elevated our trophies, whilst the others erected their scaffolds. The proof of these facts was long since established by a speech of Robespierre himself. That implacable assassin, thirsting for the blood of Carnot, accused him formally of a criminal negligence; described him at once as an egotist entirely ignorant of military affairs, and as an ambitious intriguer, invested with the exclusive direction of the military force. Hence it happened

pened that he was seldom summoned to the general committee.

They dreaded his moderation, and feared to read in his countenance the language of grief and reproach. Carnot never went from their meetings without feeling the necessity of confiding his mournful secrets to the breast of a faithful friend. Those who were at that time intimate with him, have unanimously assured me, that he every day deplored the state of France; that the tyrants were the objects of his greatest contempt, his greatest hatred; and that he expected to perish by the hand of their executioners. When any means of liberation, when a noble endeavour, a sacred insurrection, were mentioned to him, he quitted on a sudden his natural state of tranquillity, and burst into expressions of the most impetuous desire. The farther the usurpers advanced in their career, the more difficult did he find it to dissemble the horror with which they inspired him. Every one remembers the terrible expression which he addressed to the dictator in the height of his power. Robespierre, wishing to recur to new expedients to rid himself of his enemies, proposed to give to the national vengeance a more rapid impulse, to strike off heads by thousands. Carnot, looking at him with firmness, answered in the tone of indignation: *Thou art a cowardly tyrant!*

Intolerance

Intolerance will contend that this was not enough; that he ought to have fled from those savages invested with the title of governors. Such are the false principles which have ruined us. On all sides, virtuous men have yielded the field of battle to the ignorant and the furious: but they have afterwards blushed, when weeping over their defeat. Besides, we must not forget that every man in power, was at that time under the dominion of circumstances, to which he found himself under the cruel alternative of submitting or of perishing. To seek, voluntarily, the society of the wicked, is in itself a convincing proof of vice. But would it not be unjust to confound the good and the bad, because chance has forced them together. Would it not be absurd to consider Dussaulx and Boissy, for instance, as ** exaltés*, as villains, because they were mixed with a Duhem, a Maigret, a Lebon, and a Carrier? Shall we affix on Pichegru the stigma of reprobation, because he commanded our armies at a time when most of the general officers shewed themselves worthy agents of the faction of blood? Shall we reproach him with the excesses which his subordinate officers committed—their brutal want of discipline, and their refusal to give quarter? Of all the maxims laid

* Men whose sentiments were *exalted* to the height of Revolutionary fury.

down by the modern philosophy, the most sound and judicious is, without doubt, that which makes every man independent of the actions of others. Not that I look on Carnot as irreproachable in his political conduct: I can scarcely pardon him that inconsiderate zeal, that chivalrous folly, which made him, for a moment, confound his cause with that of two criminals, justly covered with the execration of the public. But this fault, as well as all others of that kind which he may have committed, derive their source from the incongruity, the fatality of events, and not from his private feelings. When master of his choice, it has always been directed toward virtue: I have observed him as a scrutinizing judge, and I have found him always the same; that is to say, inflexible, yet mild; great, yet modest. A man of character and of principles; he was in the Convention what he had been in the Legislative Assembly, an ardent Republican, a moderate Revolutionist. His new elevation has changed neither his ideas nor his inclinations. His country has done much for him; but he has done still more for his country. The campaign of the second year of the Republic, which restored to us our captured cities, our invaded frontiers; which overwhelmed with terror and dismay our boldest enemies; that multiplicity of sieges, of pitched battles, of incredible exploits with which

we

we astonished the universe, was the result of his military plans. Treason, revolt, the contention of rival parties, the league of Europe, pressed upon us, and involved us in a frightful labyrinth of evils : it was he who discovered its clue. He served as a guide to our most able generals ; he shewed himself the rival of our most valorous soldiers. His presence decided the event of several battles : he was at that of Maubeuge : he commanded one of the columns which carried, at the point of the bayonet, the post of Wattignées.

If some of those men who doubt even the plainest proof, should deny him the honour of these glorious successes, and should scruple to admit the magic influence of his talents : I should say to them, observe what happened in the third campaign. At that time he could do nothing, his life was menaced, his head was proscribed. Intriguers, stained with crimes, changing their mask by system, affecting extravagant zeal by calculation, overwhelmed him with perfidious denunciations. Pretended avengers of mankind, whom they had so much persecuted ; they prevailed, they mixed themselves with the credulous multitude of good citizens, whose language they imitated, and whose resentment they directed. Menaced by their infamous decrees, Carnot dragged out his existence a prey to

disgust, to misery, and to fear. Fear! that punishment so terrible to men like him. His innocence was indignant, his pride condemned him to silence, his merit languished in an odious inactivity. Our armies soon felt the effect of his situation; Europe had soon reason to perceive it: we lost several battles. Even our advantages became useless to us; they who governed knew not how to profit by them. They treated with the vanquished as if they had been capitulating with conquerors: they received peace as a favour, when they might have dictated it as a law. We had suffered immense losses: we gained no indemnification. The King of Prussia had violated our territory, we had the weakness to spare, perhaps even to augment his treasures. Spain herself was not compelled to pay for the French blood with which her plains had been moistened. The rebels of the Loire were appeased for an instant, only by humiliating ourselves before them, and lavishing on them deceitful promises. In a word, we had no longer either a military plan, or a diplomatic system. The piercing eyes of our enemies discovered the cause; their cunning foresight made them use every effort to prolong this state of things, and to secure themselves against the future. When the exchange of prisoners brought

brought several of our officers amongst them, they entered into conversation with them, and our political changes became the subject of their discourse. They first congratulated us on the fall of the triumvirs; they next spoke of their accomplices, and then testified their indignation that Carnot should yet survive. Carnot was, according to them, more perfidious than St. Just, more ambitious than Couthon, more ferocious than Robespierre. They described him as the chief destroyer; and indeed they did not err, if they spoke of the destruction which he caused among their own satellites.

He acquired no less a claim to the hatred of our internal enemies. His missions to the armies of the Rhine, and of the Pyrenées, and into the departments of the North, had made them acquainted with his real sentiments. They had seen him serve the state without oppressing the citizens, do honour to patriotism without proscribing toleration; and fight for liberty without recurring to the arms of tyranny. They were not able to recognize, by these signs, one of their chiefs. His moral character was very different from theirs. Even his appearance bore testimony against him; for he disdained to adjust it to any model. Fury never sparkled in his eyes, blasphemy never proceeded from his mouth. I have heard from different quarters, that the
fight.

fight of him alone struck the plunderers, in certain communes, with a kind of consternation. They could not conceive it possible that a representative, a commissioner, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, could speak in the language of politeness, and with the tone of affection. It was impossible that they should not suspect him. He heard, without enthusiasm, the recital of their Revolutionary exploits; he was not in transports at their odious denunciations; he testified no exultation when they forced him to read the list of those who were imprisoned and proscribed. When an act of rigour was proposed to him, he almost always found some reason for delay. The men of that day pardoned not such crimes as these; they endeavoured to bring him to punishment for them. Several secret meetings, held in those departments which he comforted by his presence, had his destruction for their object. He was marked out, in many letters, as a dangerous enemy. One of these papers, ridiculously atrocious, which was addressed to the committees of government, ended thus: "These are your luke-warm patriots, who cannot strike masterly strokes. When it is necessary to advance, they are always ready to retreat; they have always an *If* or a *Because*. We want, in his stead, a bold Sans-culotte, that will repress the malcontents, and clear the prisons; till you send
 such

such a one, every thing will go ill." In another they said: "Your commissioner keeps company with suspected persons. Are you very sure of him? He does not seem a true friend of the *Mountain*: you will do well to watch his conduct."

Attacked on the contrary side, since the 9th of Thermidor, he had as accusers those prejudiced politicians whose striking insincerity I have before remarked. These latter pursued him with more bitterness. Their calumnies were so continued, so obstinate, that they at length succeeded in deceiving what is called the public. So easy are successes of this kind! and so credulous is the crowd of the indolent! A few detractors lay hold on appearances to expose an individual to censure; to-day they are contented with raising doubts on his conduct; more audacious to-morrow, they accuse him with the style of conviction; on the following days, they re-assume their task, they pursue him with invective and execration, and call upon the tribunals to strike him with their sword. Nothing more is necessary to give him the character of a criminal, though he were as pure as heaven. These mistakes are not only frequent, but they are productive of the most terrible evils. The innocent person revolts at such an outrage; robbed of the esteem of his equals, having no longer any motive for caution, his mind becomes heated, his heart

heart is irritated, and his feelings take an unnatural bias. He has been so long painted in hideous colours, that at last he becomes like the copy. So difficult is it to remain faithful to the party which rejects, which defames, which menaces us ; to draw from the sole testimony of our conscience new encouragements, and a new armour for virtue ; and to oppose, to the curses of the noisy crowd, nothing but the stoicism of silence ! Such a resignation seems to be above the power of humanity ; yet of such a resignation did Carnot, for several months, afford an astonishing example. Like the just man, of whom the Latin poet speaks, he heard the tempest roar around his head, undaunted. He chose rather to brave the thunder-bolts, than to supplicate those impious hands which hurled them. “ Blind judges ! ” he seemed to say, “ since you have already decided, you are not worthy to hear me. Affirm whatever you please ; I will not deny it. Doubts would be entertained, even in opposition to my assertions ; doubts by which I should be too much humiliated. If I should speak of my hatred for those ferocious spoilers, whose sceptre has been broken, the cry of desertion would be raised against me ; I should be branded with the name of impostor. Pursue me, punish me for the good which I have done : I shall still preserve the remembrance of it, and that remembrance

brance will constitute my happiness. As to those well-meaning men, of whose suffrage I am truly ambitious ; whom your libels irritate and arm against me, who proclaim me their enemy, and who, in their senseless wishes, choose me as their victim ; they perhaps will, one day, lament that they have so much mistaken me."

Such were the sentiments which animated him in these distressing circumstances. His subsequent conduct undoubtedly proves it. When he could declare his political secret, without incurring the suspicion of cowardice ; when he beheld himself completely independent, invested with a great authority, and able to pursue the dictates of his heart, he openly ranged himself under the banners of the constitution ; he renewed his covenant with the sound part of the French people ; he determined to triumph, or to perish with them. The faction which reckoned on his support, has had no more formidable adversary. Whilst others thought it still necessary to treat them with caution, he already overwhelmed them with the weight of his influence, already drove their proselytes from the posts which they had usurped. All the newspapers mentioned, at the time when it happened, the manner in which he received a certain public functionary, who presented to him an energetic petition. I am, said the petitioner, one of those patriots who have been oppressed

Q

since

since the 9th of Thermidor.—That, said Carnot, proves nothing. But were you not an intimate acquaintance of Robespierre's?—It is true that I possessed his confidence—That is not, in my eyes, a very honourable title, and if you have no other——The Directory has just appointed me a magistrate of the people——Then take this pen, and write your resignation, if you would spare yourself the trouble of a dismissal from office.

Whenever it has been necessary to crush the conspirators, Carnot has been the first to strike the blow. It was he who pointed out to the minister of the police, the plan which it was necessary to pursue, and the avenues which it was necessary to guard, in order to seize at the same instant Babœuf, together with his papers and his fellow-labourers; a service whose importance it is unnecessary to demonstrate; for if the undertaking had failed but in part; if there had been time to burn the writings, and to forewarn one or two of the conspirators, the tocsin of vengeance would have been immediately sounded in the two councils; a most lawful proceeding would have been converted into an act of treason; the accused would have assumed the character of accusers; and it would have been the Directory, instead of Drouet, that would have been taken *in flagranti delicto*.

He has performed some services of a different nature. Obliging by disposition, he has conferred
appointments

appointments on several citizens who have appeared worthy the national confidence: our administrations owe to him many upright magistrates, our armies, many officers of the first merit, and the government its Secretary-general*, a man of information, indefatigable in office, whose manners are pleasing, his language affable, his perceptions clear, his judgment solid; who more than once has proposed, and caused to be adopted, measures of utility; who justifies the choice of his nominators, and like them merits the hatred of the disorganizing assassins.

When we saw Carnot accept the august functions which Syeyes had refused, we believed, in general, that we had a double motive for affliction. It was well known that Syeyes wanted both

* Joseph Jean Lagarde, born at Narbonne in 1755. He passed the chief part of his youth at Arras, where he was received advocate at 21 years of age, and exercised that profession till 30. His fellow-citizens elected him successively, Deputy to the General Assembly of the Tiers-Etat, Commissioner for drawing up instructions, Official of the Bailiwick, President of the Section, Notable, Elector, Secretary-general of the department of the North, and, finally, Professor of Law. In the earliest stage of the revolution, he consecrated to it his pen and his exertions. In several writings of penetration, he defended the cause of the people, and of philosophy, with a zeal so much the more laudable, though ardent, it did not pass the limits of morality. Two Proconsuls cast him into chains during the reign of terror. When they were asked the cause of his detention, they contented themselves with answering, "His influence and knowledge render him justly suspected."

morality and energy ; that he had cringed, without shame, in the anti-chamber of the tyrant-demagogue : but the reputation which an expression of Mirabeau's had gained to him, together with his complete insignificance in the days of our mourning, made the balance of opinion incline in his favour. My own sentiments were at that time partial to him. How much does such an avowal cost my sincerity ! Carnot and Syeyes !—The more I compare them, the more I am ashamed of my first decision. Syeyes, in spite of the extent of his information, and the resources of his mind, has no decided character in politics. He has compared, combined, and modified every system, without adopting any ; like the swimmer who traverses a river in every direction, without leaving a trace of his passage. The government of the Proconsuls displeases him no less than that of the royal censors. He is no more attached to the constitution of 1795, than to that of 1791. Little does it signify to him, whether it be his *jury*, or his *pyramid**, which attracts admiration : his wish is gratified if he becomes the Lycurgus of France. Carnot is guided equally by principle and by duty in his respect for the constitutional laws of the

* Syeyes, in one of his early political productions, compared the symmetry and strength of the Constitutional Monarchy to that of a *pyramid* : among his proposed improvements of the Republican system was the project of a Constitutional *Jury*.

Republic. Without seeing in them the *chef d'œuvre* of human ingenuity, he yet thinks them capable of supporting the equilibrium, the tranquillity, and even the splendour of the state. The meditations of Syeyes have been, and always will be, useless to his country. Let him conceive the most advantageous project, he would refuse to communicate it, if an article, a line, a single word were to be changed. It has often been in his power to assist in the triumph of reason; he has always preferred acting the part of a spectator. Since the fall of the Triumvirate, numberless decrees, at once prudent, useful, and salutary, have been passed. He has only proposed for adoption two or three. On every occasion of difficulty, he has remained without speaking; but with a conviction that his silence was a *public calamity*. Carnot pursues his career with an indefatigable zeal; obstacles, instead of restraining, only stimulate him: when utility is the object, he reckons his meditations, his labour, his sleepless nights, as nothing. Syeyes flatters and caresses the most despicable of the factious, I mean the Jacobins, and the disciples of Orleans: he augments their vanity, animates their hopes, and heightens their fury. Like them he complains incessantly of the encroachments of the executive power, of the aristocracy exhibited by the rich, and of the oppression exercised over the patriots.

If

If he hears the orators of the groups adding menaces to clamour, and demanding a new order of things, he listens to them with a smile, and stops, as if enchanted by their eloquence. Carnot would blush to obtain the suffrages of the wicked; he would glory in their hatred; he thinks that virtue alone deserves our esteem; that she is the only durable possession on earth; that no one ought to govern but by her and for her. Syeyes puts no bounds to his ambition: he calculates circumstances, he conceives hopes, he waits, he finishes five or six plans of political constitution, the productions of his own genius, out of which he may make a choice according to the nature of events, and the disposition of mens minds. Carnot is not more attached to honours than to fortune. The simplicity and the purity of his inclinations constitute his principal enjoyments. Surrounded by his books, his mathematical instruments, his friends, and his family, he would be as happy at Nolay as at Paris. His merit has torn him, as it were by force, from the obscurity which he loved: he served under the old government as captain: since that time he has, as is well known, led fourteen armies to victory; and yet he has scarcely advanced in rank; he is at present only chief of a battalion. Syeyes is indignant at the mere idea of a rival; he is still more vain than ambitious. If he is contradicted,
 he

he flies into a passion; if his opinion is rejected, he refuses to vote; if he cannot command, he retires; such, at least, has his conduct always been in the committees. Men of the greatest information are in his eyes only dwarfs in politics and literature — mere scholars. The Convention thought that he would be of service in drawing up the new code: he would not exert himself. The plan was presented, he was silent: it was discussed, he was silent still; three months had been devoted to it, the last articles were about to be sanctioned, when on a sudden he appeared in the tribune, and declared that the plan originally presented was the best which had ever come from the hand of man; but added, that it had not attained the last degree of perfection; and, as a proof, unfolded one of his constitutional charts. Let us imagine pride itself personified; what could it have said or done more? The peculiar characteristic of Carnot is excessive modesty. He never speaks of himself; the least degree of praise embarrasses and even hurts him; he is always anxious to avoid it. Syeyes carries his intolerance to a ridiculous height: whoever does not share his sentiments, whoever does not see with his eyes, is in his opinion a bad citizen, and a traitor. Carnot hates none but the vicious. A Royalist might in his presence regret the monarchy; a Jacobin might

might desire an equal division of lands, and he would refute both of them without passion, without ill-will; he would even esteem them if he was assured of their sincerity. Syeyes advances toward no fixed object, because he is stopped at every step by fear; aspiring to the character of a hero, he possesses the timidity of a woman. At the sound of the trumpet, confusion seizes him, he loses the command of himself; danger is to him what the hand is to the sensitive plant; on a day of insurrection, whilst his victorious friends were seeking him at the summit of power, he would hide himself, trembling with fear, in the darkness of a vault. Carnot familiarized from his youth with the principles of French honour, has given proofs of it, which he will not hesitate to repeat in the field of battle. Syeyes is distant in his manners and gloomy in his appearance. If you speak to him, he scarcely gives ear to you; if you relate to him any misfortune, he is a total stranger to compassion, and if he chance to smile, it is impossible to know, whether it is from satisfaction, from vexation, or from contempt. Even his confidants cannot reckon on his benevolence; sentiments of affection seem to be beneath the loftiness of his conceptions. Carnot with an obliging sensibility gives to all who wait on him a courteous reception. The simplicity of his manners, the mildness of his language, serve equally

equally to encourage the confused intercessor, and the timid suppliant. We expect to see a governor, proud of his dignity and inflated with his power; we behold a man of modesty, whose countenance indicates the urbanity of his mind. Such is the difference between these two characters; such is nearly the moral portrait of Carnot. Every one will recognize him in it; for at the present day every one is willing to do him justice. All the friends of order, whatever may be their opinions, look on him as their most zealous defender: they offer to him their esteem and their homage. His firmness, his disinterestedness, his philanthropy have conciliated to him every heart. In honouring him, Royalists and Republicans contend emulously together. He is odious only to those cut-throats, few in number, whose element is crime, and who see liberty and patriotism only in the toleration of pillage and assassination.

If victory (as every thing seems to announce) should ultimately be ours; if the love of order should prevail over the turbulent passions; if the constitution should be established on solid foundations; if, hereafter, the virtuous citizens, seated on the grave of faction, and enjoying the happiness of their lot, should impose on themselves the generous duty of crowning their benefactors, Carnot would receive from them the

R

oaken

oaken garland. If a column should ever be erected to the glory of our heroes ; if the national gratitude should inscribe their names upon the marble ; that of Carnot would be the first which her immortal chissel would inscribe.

REFLECTIONS.

I HAVE fulfilled a task of no small difficulty. More than one rock has presented itself in my course. If I have not avoided them all, the love of virtue must be owned to be, in some cases, an uncertain guide. I have spoken of governors only as connected with the interests of the governed: my sole desire was to strengthen the bonds which unite them together, and which support them on the brink of a bottomless abyss. I know, that by adopting the modern style, by interspersing my work with irony and sarcasm, I should obtain a greater number of readers. So pleasant is it to laugh at the expence of those whom we ought to respect ! Those writings, propagated by avarice and desired by malignity, have not only the sparkling of the sword ; they have also its murderous edge. By a singular contradiction of sentiment, the public is irritated at the evil-doers, but charmed with the evil-speakers.

speakers. Such is the general subversion of ideas, or, rather, the general debasement of mind, that to praise a magistrate demands an exertion of courage. Every day calumny and invective load thousands of presses. We have suffered so much, during the last five years, that we feel an odious desire to generalize our resentment, we wish to behold criminals all around us. Whoever does not censure, will certainly be censured. In vain shall I observe to the raging multitude, that I have avoided exaggeration, that I have weighed the least of my praises in the balance of truth. Their only answer will be to stun my ears with the triple epithet of Jacobin, of Royalist, and of Parasite. But I am consoled by my own reflections. Let them overwhelm me with their abuse; let them find in these memoirs food for their hatred; let them attack afresh those whom I have pointed out as deserving the confidence of the nation; let them comment upon some errors, or even facts which I have related; I shall, nevertheless, reckon upon the suffrage of every just man. The just man will thank me for having brought him acquainted with the characters of those who regulate his destiny; for having tranquillized his mind, by proving that his person, his property, and his enjoyments, are under the safeguard of powerful protectors. At every step that we shall have taken together, he will have

seen the object toward which we advanced. Yet I wish him to know that I was not directed by trifling views. I have spoken well of the guardians of power, because I believe, in the sincerity of my soul, that every one of them serves the cause of the good Frenchmen. Had I judged them capable of mistaking their duty, of restoring to vice its influence, to virtue its sufferings, and to their country its sorrows, the hand which wrote their panegyric should have still more readily signed their accusation.

APPENDIX.

The following are Specimens of the Poetical Talents of M. CARNOT, which the Translator thinks it right to submit to the Public in their original Dress. The two first are selected by M. DESPAZE, and to them the Translator has added a third, which seemed of equal Merit, and which appeared in the *Almanach des Muses* for 1791.

JAMAIS ET POURTANT,

ou

CONVERSATION AVEC MADAME GERTRUDE.

DITES-MOI, Madame Gertrude,
Fûtes-vous belle en votre temps?
Jamais, me répondit la prude:
La beauté perd les jeunes gens.
Pourtant j'avois la peau tendue;
Mon œil n'étoit point éraillé:
Même on prétend que l'on m'a vue
Ayant l'air assez éveillé.

Dites-moi, Madame Gertrude,
Eûtes-vous jadis quelqu'amant?
Jamais, me répondit la prude:
Aimer est un crime si grand:
Pourtant on n'étoit pas de glace;
Lindor a voulu m'en conter;
Lindor avoit beaucoup de grace;
J'eus peine à ne pas l'écouter.

Dites-moi, Madame Gertrude,
N'a-t-il pas su vous émouvoir?
Jamais, me répondit la prude;
Je tenois trop à mon devoir.
Pourtant certain jour de carême,
A voix basse je le prêchai;
Mais il prêcha si bien lui-même
Qu'il me troubla, je trébuchai.

Dites-

Dites-moi, Madame Gertrude,
 Avez-vous trébuché souvent ?
 Jamais, me répondit la prude,
 Si non dans ce fatal instant.
 Pourtant au bout de la journée,
 Quand j'allois au bois sommeiller,
 J'étois souvent tout étonnée,
 Dans ses bras de me réveiller.

Dites-moi, Madame Gertrude,
 Trébucheriez-vous bien encore ?
 Jamais, me répondit la prude ;
 J'aimerois cent fois mieux la mort :
 Pourtant à quelque complaisance
 S'il falloit pour vous consentir,
 Je tâcherois, avec décence,
 De contenter votre desir.

Dites-moi, Madame Gertrude,
 Du ciel est-ce là le chemin ?
 Jamais, me répondit la prude,
 Je n'en connus de plus certain.
 Ah ! votre bonté me pénètre,
 Répondis-je à ce propos-là :
 Pourtant, si vous voulez permettre,
 Je me sauverai sans cela.

LE FILS DE VENUS.

QUI définira cet enfant
 Aussi vieux que le monde,
 Marmot dont l'empire comprend
 Les cieux, la terre & l'onde ;
 Qui, les yeux couverts d'un bandeau,
 Lit dans nos cœurs, tient le flambeau
 Qui consume & féconde ?

C'est lui que célébroit Sapho,
 Qu'on adoroit à Gnide,
 Qui desséchoit la nymphe Echo,
 Brûloit la Néréide ;
 Défarmoit le dieu de l'enfer,
 En taureau changeoit Jupiter,
 Faisoit filer Alcide.

Qui

Qui rend si fier, qui rend si doux,
Si tendre, si coquette,
Si confiant, & si jaloux,
Si vive, & si discrète ;
Qui cède tout pour tout gagner,
Qui se foumet pour mieux régner,
Qu'on fuit, & qu'on regrette.

Protée aimable, doux poison ;
Source de mal, & d'aïse,
Souvent dupe, & souvent fripon,
Sérieuse fadaïse ;
Qui blesse avec des traits dorés,
Brise en riant des nœuds sacrés,
Nous fâche, & nous apaise.

Qui parfois émeut la pitié,
Parfois bénit sa chaîne ;
Tantôt ressemble à l'amitié,
Et tantôt à la haine.
Qui s'alimente de rigueurs,
Expire au comble des faveurs ;
Feu céleste, ombre vaine.

LE TEMPS PASSE,

Dialogue burlesque entre Madame Fagotin et M. Barbichon.

MADAME FAGOTIN.

AH ! bon jour, monsieur *Barbichon* !
Je maudissois l'humaine engeance,
Et gémissois du mauvais ton
Qui maintenant domine en France.

M. BARBICHON.

Bon jour, madame *Fagotin* !
Comme vous, contre la jeunesse
J'ai de l'humeur ; je suis chagrin,
Et donne au diable notre espèce.

M. FAG.—Convenez que les jeunes gens
Etoient autrefois plus aimables,
Plus gais, et sur-tout plus galans.
O mœurs ! ô siècles déplorables !

M. BAR.

M. BAR.—Jadis on trouvoit des amies,
Le beau sexe étoit abordable ;
Mais les cœurs se sont refroidis :
D'honneur, c'est inimaginable !

M. FAG.—C'étoit un éternel printems,
C'étoient bouquets de fleurs nouvelles
Dont l'odeur enivroit les sens ;
On n'en trouve plus de si belles.

M. BAR.—Tout dégénère en ce climat,
Les bonnes choses sont changées ;
Les astres perdent leur éclat,
Et les saisons sont dérangées.

M. FAG.—Combien de fots ajustemens !
Qui ne prendroit nos demoiselles,
Pour des bergères de romans ?
Quel ridicule, et quels modèles !

M. BAR.—C'est à s'en tenir les côtés,
De voir toutes ces simagrées ;
On diroit des divinités :
La peste soit des mijaurées !

M. FAG.—Plus de rangs, plus de qualité ;
On vous préfère une grisette
A la véritable beauté :
Oh ! l'extravagance est complète.

M. BAR.—Très-vrai, madame *Fagotin* !
Vous parlez comme une peinture ;
Un petit fat, un aigrefin,
Supplante la magistrature.

M. FAG.—Oui, le monde tire à sa fin,
Vous le verrez, je vous le jure,
Je perds mon nom de *Fagotin*,
Monsieur *Barbichon*, si ça dure.

FINIS.



